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GAMEFAN

NEXT GE[N] VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE
VOLUME 5 ISSUE 7
JULY 1997



CRYSTAL DYNAMICS' POWER DUO!!

GEX ENTER THE GECKO

AND PANDEMONIUM 2 SERIOUS SEQUELS!!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

- TIME CRISIS
- ACE COMBAT 2
- BLASTO
- SKULL MONKEYS
- FORMULA 1 '97
- TOP GEAR RALLY
- LOST WORLD
- ARMORED CORE
- CROC
- CRASH 2

SATURN EXCLUSIVES!

- WIPEOUT 2097
- RESIDENT EVIL





FIRST HANDS-ON PREVIEW!

APOCALYPSE STARRING BRUCE WILLIS

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FIRST PICS: TOMB RAIDER 2

PLUS: GAMEFAN TALKS TO THE CREATORS OF BATMAN & ROBIN, FINAL FANTASY VII, SPAWN AND NUCLEAR STRIKE!!



ACTIVISION
Thou shalt kill
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The end begins this Fall.

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ISSN# 1092-7212

Recently, we had cause to dust off our extensive 16-bit archive. Prompted by our "Games That Need Sequels" feature on page 20. What began as a brief interlude quickly became an exercise in gameplay comparison. Days were spent playing nothing but 16 bit classics. Within hours, the visual boundaries melted away, and gameplay took center stage. We were forced to deal with complex patterns and timing situations, elaborate level design and formidable bosses that took forever to defeat.

> "graphic overhauls have not been met with sorely needed gameplay innovations."

We came away with the conclusion that while hardware has evolved greatly in a relatively short amount of time, game design, for the most part, has not. And also, that today's games are a lot more forgiving. Are designers and programmers wrestling so hard jamming in maximum polygons and cinemas that they're beginning to overlook the basic principles that parked us behind home consoles in the first place?

There are some cases where relative game play exists, Tomb Raider and SM64, for instance, showcased stunning 3D play mechanics. But for the most part it seems that the genres which have benefited most from the 32/64 bit explosion have been Fighters, Sports, and RPGs. Being that the basic premise of each can only evolve so far, added graphics and AI have been enough to vault them into next gen status, but in the case of the platformer, adventure and action RPG categories, graphic overhauls have not been met with sorely needed gameplay innovations.

So, will the upcoming E3 mark the beginning of 3D supremacy, the continuing resurgence of 2D, or a healthy coalition of both?

A glance at some of this year's main attractions certainly lends itself to the 3rd scenario. Gex 2, Tomb Raider 2, Crash 2, Spawn, Blasto, Croc, Sonic, Dracula 3D, Goemon 5, and MegaMan Neo are just some of this year's formidable crop of big budget 3D games, but the 2D category will have strong representation as well, with such gems as Castlevania Symphony of the Night, SkullMonkeys, Yuke Yuke Trouble makers, MegaMan X4, Yoshi's Island 64 and hopefully Silhouette Mirage.

If somehow the 2D games can manage to entice today's gamers as much as 3D ones do, and 3D games exhibit the clever design of those 2D classics, well, then, I guess it'll be one helluva year. Join us next month for a complete run down of the Electronic Entertainment Expo.



A METROPOLIS PUBLICATION

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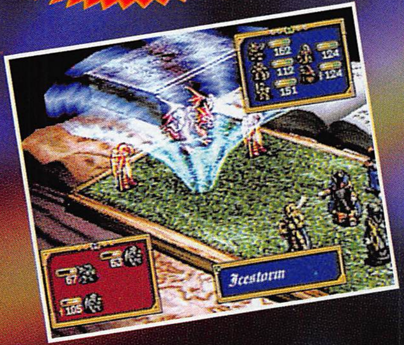
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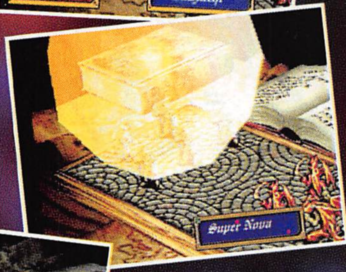
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"One of the All-time great Stategy/RPG's"
(PSExtreme)

"...Ogre Battle has Solid Seller emblazoned on it."
(Video Game Advisor—April, 1997)



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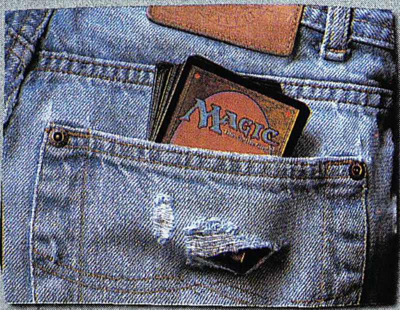
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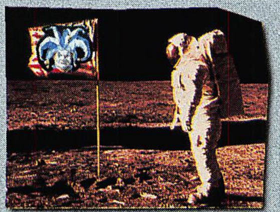




Everything you need to play fits into this handy compartment.

fig. 1a
THE POWER STRUCTURE

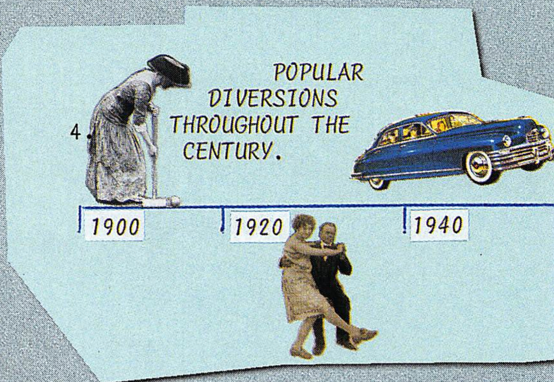


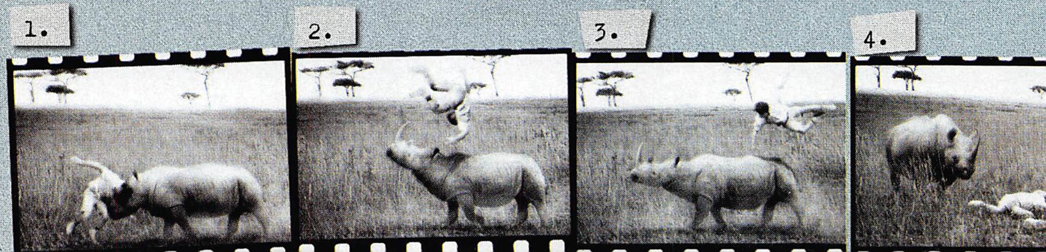


Translated in nine languages, Magic can be played anywhere on earth. As for other locales, we're working on it.



Imagine, a game that relies on social interaction and brain power. What a novel idea!







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TEN NEGLECTED
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To flee the monotony of everyday life, Magic is a wise alternative to the street luge.
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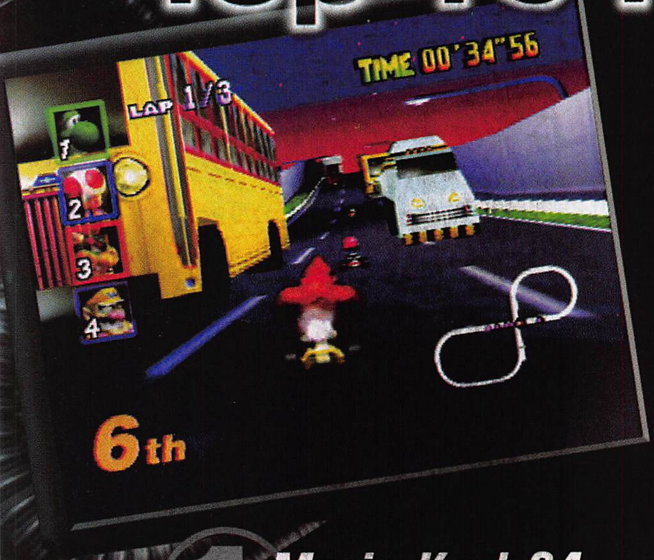
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Top 10 Most Wanted

FOR THE WEEK ENDING 5/30/97



1 Mario Kart 64
READERS' TOP TEN **N64**

READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Mario Kart 64* - N64
2. *Tomb Raider* - PS
3. *Turok* - N64
4. *Resident Evil* - PS
5. *Super Mario 64* - N64
6. *SoulBlade* - PS
7. *Suikoden* - PS
8. *Jet Moto* - PS
9. *Tekken 3* - PS
10. *Wave Race* - N64

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Tomb Raider 2* - PS
2. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
3. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
4. *Zelda 64* - N64
5. *StarFox 64* - N64



6. *Crash 2* - PS
7. *Duke Nukem* - SS
8. *Tekken 3* - PS
9. *Quake* - SS
10. *Lost World* - PS

GAMEFAN EDITOR'S TOP TEN



1. *Wild Arms* - PS
2. *Castlevania X* - PS
3. *Runabout* - PS
4. *Alundra* - PS
5. *Swagman* - PS
6. *MegaMan 8* - PS
7. *StarFox 64* - N64
8. *VMX Racing* - PS
9. *Shining the Holy Ark* - Saturn
10. *Dynamite Headdy* - Gen



1. *Shining the Holy Ark* - Saturn
2. *Shining in the Darkness* - Gen
3. *Shining Force* - Sega CD
4. *Sega Rally Netlink* - Saturn
5. *Virtual On Netlink* - Saturn
6. *Gamera 2000* - PS
7. *Tobal 2* - PS
8. *Poy Poy* - PS
9. *Guardian Heroes* - Saturn
10. *Phantasy Star* - SMS



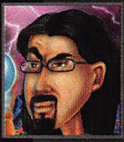
1. *GL Quake* - PC w/3DFX
2. *Broken Helix* - PS
3. *StarFox 64* - N64
4. *Time Crisis* - PS
5. *MSH* - Saturn
6. *Fighters Megamix* - Saturn
7. *Shadow Warrior* - PC
8. *Street Fighter III* - Arcade
9. *Henry* - Tamagotchi
10. *Ghosts 'n Goblins* - Arcade



1. *Tobal 2* - PS
2. *Rally Cross* - PS
3. *Mario Kart 64* - N64
4. *Warcraft II* - Mac
5. *Poy Poy* - PS
6. *Ace Combat 2* - PS
7. *Jet Moto* - PS
8. *CoolBoarders* - PS
9. *Rage Racer* - PS
10. *Blast Corps* - N64



1. *Tekken 3* - Arcade
2. *Parappa the Rapper* - PS
3. *Tobal 2* - PS
4. *Ace Combat 2* - PS
5. *Stun Runner* - Arcade
6. *Super Mario Kart* - SNES
7. *StarFox 64* - N64
8. *Tail of the Sun* - PS
9. *Blood* - PC
10. *3D Monster Maze* - ZX81*



1. *Wild Arms* - PS
2. *Fighters Megamix* - Saturn
3. *Rage Racer* - PS
4. *StarFox 64* - N64
5. *Virtual On Netlink* - Saturn
6. *Tobal 2* - PS
7. *MegaMan X4* - Saturn
8. *Sonic Jam* - Saturn
9. *Poy Poy* - PS
10. *Gaires* - Gen

WIN

THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize: Your choice of a 32X, VIRTUAL BOY, or NOMAD.

Second Prize: Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint.

Third Prize: A FREE year of GameFan! The best magazine in the universe!

Congratulations to last month's winners:

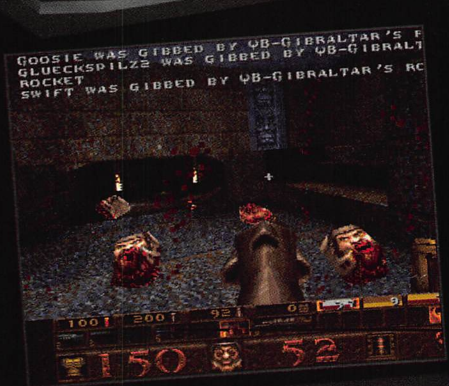
First Prize:	Second Prize:	Third Prize:
Don Mooney,	Kunchang Lee,	Osmin Arias,
Simi Valley, CA	Pasco Robles, CA	San Fran., CA

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest:
Kev Shaw
Press & PR Manager, *Eutechnyx(UK)*

1. *Quake Deathmatch* - PC
   "Frag your friends and not get arrested!"
2. *Duke Nukem 3D* - PC
   "Hail to the King, baby!"
3. *Manic Miner* - ZX Spectrum*
   "Pixel-perfect gameplay"
4. *Tekken 2* - PS
   "Realistic combat and superb gameplay."
5. *Gunstar Heroes* - Genesis
   "Excellent, engaging game design."
6. *Defender* - Arcade
   "The King of Cool games."
7. *International Karate+* - Amiga
   "The Grandaddy of the beat-'em-up!"
8. *Mega Bomberman* - Genesis
   "Pure gameplay."
9. *Night Trap* - Sega CD
   "Total B-Movie cheese!"
10. *Jet-Pac* - ZX Spectrum*
    "Hard to believe they used to produce games that were only 16k in size!"



*Note that the ZX Spectrum was a UK-constructed machine very much like the Commodore 64. Appalling sound and graphics (as you'd expect), but some of the greatest games ever made! Rare cut their teeth on this machine! Even older still was the first ZX machine (ZX81). The machine had a 1K memory (!) with an optional 16K ram-pack and displayed in black and white! Respect to Kev for his Old School choices!

Hocus Pocus

HOCUS POCUS DESIGN BY REUBUS, WITH AWESOME ART BY THE WEB DUDES

ENTER THE GAMEFAN HOCUS POCUS GIVEAWAY!

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A GXTV

FIRST PRIZE:
A SEGA NOMAD

SECOND PRIZE:
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GXTV is the world's first video game TV with hyper-amplified sound and graphics. Enhance the thrill of gaming with adjustable speaker doors, stereo surround sound and a 15 watt sub woofer. Plus, the intense screen graphics will make you feel like your head's right inside the game. GXTV is also a 181-channel, 13" stereo TV with two A/V inputs, stereo headphone jack, backlit remote control and tilt/swivel stand. So whatcha waitin' for? Send in those codes and maybe you can win one of these GXTVs for yourself!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS MONTH'S WINNERS!



The mighty Monitaur seeks the finest cheats, secrets and tips known to humanity, and we need them from YOU!! We'll look over all the codes you send and award a magnificent Grand Prize every single month! Remember, no cheap codes from previously published US magazines! Winners will be drawn each month and displayed in the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a subscription will receive a one-year extension.)

SEND YOUR CARDS AND LETTERS TO:
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GRAND PRIZE WINNER:
MIN KIM
SUMMIT, NJ

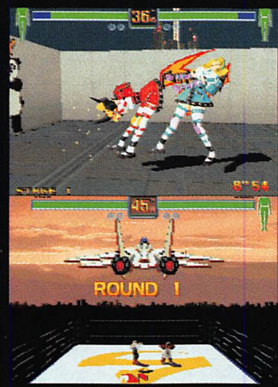
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FIGHTERS MEGAMIX
Extra Options, Mini Game





EXTRA OPTIONS

Hyper mode - Defeat 11 or more opponents in Survival mode to unlock Hyper Mode!
No Damage - Fight 500 rounds
Play as Chop - After turning on your Saturn 30 times w/FMM, pick Kumachan with X or Z
Play as School Girl Candy - Pick Candy with X or Z
Play as VF1 Siba - Pick Siba with X or Z
F-14 Fly By - Set your background to Vipers B.M. then have both players hold down X as the round begins.
Kumachan Face - Set your background to Vipers B.M. then both players choose Kumachan!

MINI GAME OF PATIENCE

Clear your game data and beat paths A through H in 1P Mode (but not I). Then go to Training Mode and get OKs next to 1200 moves or more. Finally, return to 1P mode and select course I, holding down L. Match the pictures.

DRACULA X
Richter's Lucky Armor!



Once you have properly beaten this incredible game (inlcuding the mirror upside down castle), start a new file and enter one of these names.
RICHTER - Play the game as Richter Belmont!
AXEARMOR - You get an 'interesting' suit of armor.
X-X!V"Q - Weak strength, but insane luck!



TOBAL 2
Size 'em up!

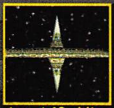


When selecting your character press and hold **L2** and **R2**. Then while playing press **L2** to shrink your character and **R2** to grow. And the frame rate doesn't change!!!
Also beat the game on Easy, Normal or Hard to play as the bosses.
Press and hold ▲, ●, ■, or **X** during the replay to select a win pose.

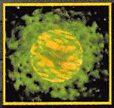


STARFOX 64

KNIGHTMARE'S MINI STRATEGY GUIDE



AREA 6
Use the quick bomb detonation technique right at the start of the stage in the mine field to get 40+ hits straight away. Shoot the pinwheel space stations for +3 hits each and at the end of the level shoot the star cruiser's control towers to down them for +5 hits each. **300**



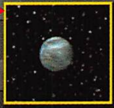
VENOM
The easiest way to get a medal on this planet is take the hard path and then just kill the Starwolf team as quickly as possible. If you're fast enough you'll get +50 hits for each of them. When fighting Andross, take out his hands and then shoot the asteroids he spits at you to build up your energy and bomb supply. **200**



BOLSE DEFENSE STATION
You get +3 hits for every power generator you take out. Also, the quicker you shoot down the Starwolf team, the more points you get. Try following Slippy, as normally a group of three enemies will get on his tail and you can nail them all with one lock on blast. **150**



SECTOR Z
Stop all six of the giant missiles from hitting the Great Fox. You can fly in the docking bay at the back of the Great Fox to repair your Arwing and refill your energy. If you're going for the medal, DON'T go through Zoness or Cat will destroy one of the missiles, thus taking away from your hits. **100**



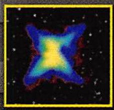
MACBETH
As you approach the boss area (past the checkpoint) you must shoot all eight of the metal flagposts with numbers on them. Then when you approach the board with eight green lights, shoot or hit the switch in the middle. **150**



TITANIA
The mines do not give you hits, so don't shoot them. The giant insect robots give +3 hits each. Most of your hits will come from the air, so keep those energy blasts firing. Use homing bombs when there are too many ships to take down with normal fire. It helps if you slow down a lot. **150**



ZONESS
You have to shoot all the floating search lights. If you miss one, the light's color will turn red, indicating that you will not be going to Sector Z. Let rip with all your bombs on this stage, as you can refill on the boss. **250**



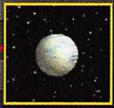
SECTOR X
After the checkpoint, when the level splits left or right, go left. After a while you will come across a series of hanging rectangular boundaries in the middle of your path. Shoot them in the middle repeatedly and they will eventually open up. Fly through all of them and you will warp to a secret area and then Sector Z. **150**



SOLAR
Get 50+ hits to go to Macbeth. For the medal, learn where the groups of birds are and use a homing bomb to nail them all. Also, it sometimes pays to fire a bomb into the lava waves as occasionally you will destroy things behind them that you couldn't normally see. **100**



AQUAS
You must pilot your sub through all of the rock arches on the level. There are several at the beginning, and then one at the end after you leave the valley with the starfish and electric triangles. **150**



FORTUNA
You must defeat all four members of the Starwolf team in the allotted time. They cannot be harmed by bombs or lock-ons shots so use lasers only. Also try double tapping your Z or R buttons when you turn for a super tight arc. The quicker you kill them, the more hits you get. **50**



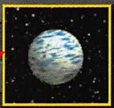
KATINA
Destroy the alien mothership before the time runs down and protect your pyramid base. To get the medal shoot a lock on blast at the groups of alien ships that chase Bill's men. Also shoot the motherships four flaps for +5 hits each. **150**



SECTOR Y
Just get a 100+ hits. Simple. Use the quick bomb detonation technique (tap the bomb button again after you launch a bomb) to snag the otherwise invincible missiles. When the level splits, go up for more hits. **150**



METEO
Just past the Check Point you will see a circle of blue triangular shards to the top/right of the screen. Fly through it and you will speed up. There are a number of blue circles that follow on opposite sides of the screen and you must fly through all of them in order to warp to the secret stage. **200**



CORNERIA
When Falco is attacked by the 3 ships, make sure you take them all out before they kill him. Then as you reach the sea section, fly through all of the rocky arches. Falco will then lead you through the waterfall to a secret valley. Defeat the boss from the first level of the original StarFox and you will be taken to Sector Y. **150**

MEDALS
As you can see by the map, each planet has a number in the corner. That's the minimum number of hits you need to score to receive a medal for that planet. Note that you will not be awarded a medal unless ALL of your wingmen are alive at the end of the stage.

YOUR PRIZE
Get a medal on all 15 planets and you will be rewarded with a graphic equalizer on the sound test, tanks in the four player Vs mode, and a more difficult 'Extra' mode of play. Complete the game on the hardest route in Extra mode and you'll be rewarded with characters on foot in the Vs mode!!

RAGE RACER
Mirror, Mirror...



After selecting "Race Start," press and hold **L1 + R1 + Select + Start** until the race begins and the track will be mirrored.

Pause the game at any time and press and hold **▲** then **L1** or **R1** to toggle your rear view mirror on and off.



SONIC 3D BLAST
Cheat Mode



Are you very bad? Would you like to skip through levels of Sonic 3D Blast all willy nilly? Here's all you have to do. Hold **C** as you press **Start** for a new game. During the game, pause and press **A** to skip acts, **B** to skip stages, and **C** to go straight to the last level. Press **Y** for medals, **X** for extra guys, and **Z** for continues. Shame on you.



WAR GODS
Lotsa Cool Stuff!

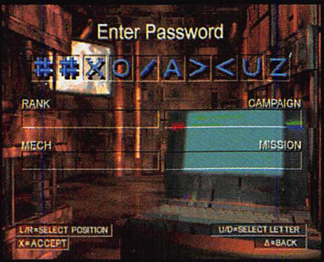
CHEAT MENU:
On the screen where it says "Midway presents War Gods," enter this sequence: Right, Right, Right, B, B, A, A. The screen should flash if done correctly. Now under Options there should be a new option: Cheat Menu.

FREE PLAY:
At title screen enter: Left C, Left C, Right (d-pad), A, B, Up C, Right, C

PLAY AS GROX:
At the character select screen press: Down, Right, Left, Left, Up, Down, Right, Up, Left, Left, and choose any character.

PLAY AS EXOR:
At the character select press: Left, Down, Down, Right, Left, Up, Left, Up, Right, Down, and choose any character.

MECH WARRIOR 2
Numerous Codes



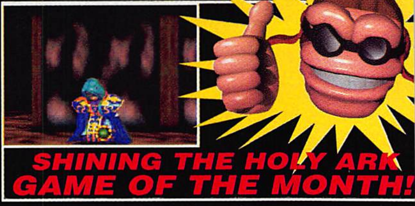
Enter these codes at the Password screen:
Extra Heat Sinks:
X X O / A 4 > Y +
Jump Jets:
Y X O / A > Y O L
Cruise Throttle:
A X O / A 4 Y Y A
Unlock Missions:
T < X O / A X A < =
Overweight 'Mechs:
O X O / A > > O /
Extra Variance:
T # X O / < A X < <
More Ammo:
T O X O / A X > T U
Invincibility:
X O / A > < U Z
New "Elemental" Chassis:
T / X O / A Z < # *
New "Tarantula" Chassis:
/ X O / A 4 < L Y

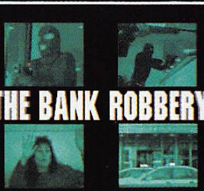
VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



E. STORM REUBUS KNIGHTMARE SHIDOSHI HAMBLETON GLITCH EVIL ROX SUBSTANCE D SHIN ROX ORION



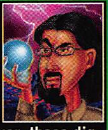


Lethal Enforcers
PlayStation
Konami
Shooting



With *Crypt Killers* and now *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami is fast earning themselves a reputation for being the purveyors of bad gun games. I remember getting a kick out of the original *LE* coin-op when it first came out, but that was over a decade ago. These days shooting inanimate cardboard cut-outs just doesn't pass muster. Also, no matter what light gun or TV we tried, the game seemed frustratingly inaccurate, ruining what little fun there was. Wait for *Time Crisis*.

G 5 C 4 P 5 M 5 O 4 **43**



Lethal Enforcers just won't go away as we are presented with not only the original *LE* but its sequel, the old west flavored *LE2*. If these games are the key to some long lost childhood bliss, then by all means check them out; they are arcade perfect. In today's polygonal environment however, these digitized games from a bygone era come close to being jokes. I suppose both games do have some merit as fast-paced light gun games, but there is simply so much out there that is so much better. This LE collection is for die hard fans only. If you haven't played LE yet, don't bother.

G 6 C na P 6 M 6 O 6 **63**



Back in the heyday of digitization, *Lethal Enforcers* was pretty amazing. You were shooting real, "live" people! The 16-bit home versions that followed were great, timely translations, and sold very well. In 1997 however, it's quite the chore to play *Lethal Enforcers I and II*. The graphics are, of course, absolutely perfect. Do I care? No. The enemy patterns, graphics, and accuracy of gun games has progressed so far since *Lethal Enforcers* that going back to it is nearly impossible. It's just one of those genres that gets better with time.

G 4 C 6 P 5 M 6 O 6 **60**



POY POY
PlayStation
Konami
Pounding Others



Poy Poy, a surprising import release thrust upon us in record time is about as much fun as four people can legally have. I play as "Kool" and I recommend you do the same. I made Gary whimper like a small farm animal as he fell again and again to my superior skills. The game's loaded with strategy, level specific items of destruction and has a cool gouraud shaded look. Humiliation's what it's all about. This game's a kick!

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 10 **85**



Who'd've thought a game where you chuck stuff around could be so much fun? Konami, that's who. There's something deeply primeval about bashing the hell out of all your friends with heavy objects. The different-themed arenas are cool, and there's even a little strategy in there (emphasis on little). Be forewarned however, like *Bomberman*, the Joy of *Poy* can only be appreciated with three other victims, er, friends. Single players need not apply.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 9 **88**



This is *Bomberman* in 3D with the walls missing! Yes, indeedy doodly my mutant gaming friends, I too have sampled the delights of molesting three other GameFan editors in a small arena (er, but we won't go there), but I'd much rather be playing *Poy Poy*! And that's what I'd recommend you doing. Find three friends. Buy that multi-tap and get throwing polygon rocks and bombs at each other! Fine, fine fun for gamers with chums, but for those lonely freakish weirdos lacking social activity should pass. Shidoshi hates this title...

G 7 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 10 **85**



Swagman
PlayStation
Core/Eidos
Action-Role Playing



Mixing old style top down gameplay with nifty CG cinemas, hot lighting and both rendered and polygonal graphics, Core's *Swagman* hits the spot if you're in the mood for some haunted puzzle solving, boss killing, and exploration gameplay. An inspired moody soundtrack is in tow which lends itself nicely to the surroundings and the game play is engaging and well thought out. Not a next generation breakthrough, but a fun romp indeed.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **80**



Core takes a turn for the weird with this surreal top down action/adventure. I love the twin world premise (like *NiGHTS* on acid) and the game's special effects laden graphics perfectly convey Swagman's twisted dreamscape. The duel character control (*Lost Vikings*-style) is a nice addition to the *ZAMN*-style gameplay, while the music and FX are suitably creepy. *Swagman* may just be 16-bit gameplay dressed up in 32-bit clothes, but it's still an absorbing and unique adventure.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 7 **87**



It's been too long since I've experienced a game of this type... way too long. I didn't even realize how much I missed the genre. *Swagman* basically takes a very 16-bit gameplay engine and injects it with gorgeous, modern CG graphics, incredible shadow effects and cool rendered cinemas. If you're an old-school gamer like many here at the GF offices, you may want to get an (hmm, can't think of any other way to put this) artificial "blast from the past" with *Swagman*'s gameplay.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 7 **82**



Gamera 2000
PlayStation
Virgin Japan
3D Shooting



From the B-Movie kingdom comes *Gamera*. It may be a *Panzer* rip-off all the way but it is one spectacular ride. SEE! Cheesy FMV the likes of *Sewer Shark* and *Night Trap*! EXPERIENCE! *Gamera* flying above you attacking enemies by your side! Spectacular lighting, great level design and one burnin' speed bike sequence bring home the bacon in this must-have import release. Especially if you haven't played *Panzer*... anyone??

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 8 **80**



Hah! Free from the internet! I'm never going back, NEVER! Well, maybe tomorrow.. Anyway, *Gamera*! Now this is one hot little title. Sure, many will claim it's nothing more than a *Panzer Dragoon* rip-off (I will certainly agree that many elements are almost identical), but besides the lack of *PD*'s cool techno/organic theme and beautiful music, *Gamera* is actually superior in many ways! No, really! The graphics are amazing, the bosses are hot, the music is great, the FMV is beyond campy, the level design is outstanding and... well, it features a large fire-breathing turtle! What can beat that? I still enjoy the experience of playing *Panzer* more, but *Gamera* is certainly a worthy PlayStation alternative...

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 5 **90**



Gamera is superhep! Just when the next *Panzer* sequel should logically, chronologically come, we get *Gamera 2000*!! Yoshhaa! *Panzer Dragoon Drei*! Well... almost. If you're a shooter fan, you should definitely look into *Gamera*. The graphics, level design and sound are all superb, and you NEED to see the FMV... It represents new levels of mad skill in the acting profession. Be on the lookout for Harry Linback's smashed dialogue, especially. Try this choice selection which makes less than no sense in the part of the game it appears in: "An ancient ruler will be sealed from another space and time has been found missing, again!"

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 2 **89**

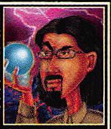


Namco Vol. 4
PlayStation
Namco
Multi-Format



Well here's my take on the whole Namco Museum thing. It's cool to have arcade perfect translations of all these coin-ops, but unless you're a serious collector or happen to have a 'thing' for The Genji & Heike Clans I can't really see a reason for getting Vol. "C." I mean, most of you probably haven't have even *heard* of these games. Still, the Namco Museum is what it is, and at least you know exactly what you're getting.

G 6 C 6 P 7 M 7 O 7 **69**



It's the big "C" in Namco's Museum collection, Volume 4, and it contains "some of the most advanced classics yet." I like *Assault* (compatible with Sony's big dual stick) and *Ordyne*, but the rest of the games failed to elicit any kind of tangible response from me. Probably because I didn't really play any of the other games when they were new—part of the biggest draw of Museum games, the nostalgia, is lost on me. I don't necessarily even know how to numerically rate this collection. I mean, it's just some old games, they are what they are. Ah hell, all seven fever it is.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 7 **70**



Volume 4...where else are you going to play The Genji & Heike Clans, huh? At your local arcade? On another home console? Huh? That's right, only the "C" lets you dive into the obscurity of TG & HC, that wacky side-scrolling slasher. Or how 'bout *The Return of Ishtar*? Hey hey, that's good stuff. Heck, you know you can't go wrong with *Assault* or *Pac-Land*, and *Ordyne* stands the test of time. Until the big "O" shows-up (as in,"O-my god, like, it's the best one, you know?"), this is the coolest classic collection around. Now about those scores...

G 6 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 9 **72**


Eve Be Nimble, Eve Be Quick,
Or Eve Be Sliced by Gore's Big Stick.
TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
DARK RIFT™
Dark Rift brings out the best in people. Eve works her butt off to turn Gore into a meaty pin cushion. Gore busts his gut to move Eve into the path of his axe. And you'll need your best, because Dark Rift gives it up. Dark Rift delivers more fight, more often with more speed than you have ever seen before. Check out Dark Rift for N64 or Win 95 and get flesh scorching projectiles, hyper quick ten hit combos, blazing frame rates and some very unpleasant surprises for the competition.
NINTENDO64
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N64
PC-CD ROM
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NetLink Virtual On
Saturn NetLink
Sega
Fighting

NetLink owners have been crying out for games since the peripherals release last Christmas (what was Sega thinking?!) and finally the wait is over. Has it been worth it? In a word: YES! To play *Virtual On* (or *Sega Rally*) NetLink is to experience full screen, full speed (ie. no slow down) two player action that up until now was the sole privilege of PC owners. *Virtual On* is a great game, but with NetLink support it enters the stratosphere. I can't wait for *Duke Nukem 3D*! I'll take you all on!

G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 8 · O 9 — **91**

Take a first rate Saturn arcade translation and add two player, full screen modem play with the NetLink and you end up with a game so nice, we're reviewing it twice. After extensive play sessions against Glitch from our respective hovels, I can attest to the quality of the experience. Basically, it's flawless. There is virtually no lag, and playing against someone hundreds of miles away is as seamless and fast as playing a one player match against the computer. Also new in this version is an option allowing you to alter the color scheme of your mech. NetLink owners better be happy.

G 8 · C 8 · P 9 · M 8 · O 8 — **90**

Bear in mind that every editor Reviewing a NetLink game will base their GCPMO numbers on how well the game performs as a NetLink game, O.K.? Damn, that disclaimer killed my space, so let me ask you one simple question: How would you like a polygon perfect full-screen two-player *Virtual On*, running silky-smooth at 30fps, with no lag times, available for your NetLink RIGHT NOW? Yeah, me too. The NetLink has been a very slow starter, but with perfect versions of *Sega Rally*, *Virtual On*, and *Duke 3D* (yes!) coming this summer, it finally looks like a viable peripheral.

G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 8 · O 9 — **92**



Herc's Adventure
Saturn
Lucasarts
Top-Down Action

Herc's may seem a little basic at first, but dig deeper and you'll soon discover there's more to it than just *Zombies Ate My Neighbors* in Greece. The whole RPG structure gives the game an extra dimension, while the impressive soundtrack and trademark Lucasarts humor keeps things bubbling along. It's definitely not perfect, but if you're in the market for a wacky action/RPG with the emphasis on action then check it out.

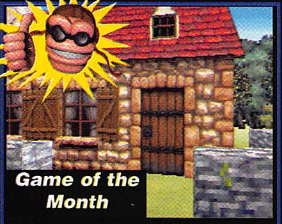
G 7 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 8 — **81**

Fans of Lucasarts' 16-bit *Zombies Ate My Neighbors* are in for an evolutionary treat with *Herc's Adventure*. Featuring incredibly similar play mechanics and even the exact same flying saucers as *ZAMN*, *Herc's* is old school overhead action. It also retains that basic but nice hand drawn look. Unfortunately, it also shares *ZAMN's* slightly frustrating collision. I had a pretty decent time with *Herc's Adventure*, just not a great time. There are some funny moments in *Herc's* and quite a few funny things to do like chuck inflatable cows. In the end, it simply failed to really excite. Oh well.

G 7 · C 7 · P 7 · M 8 · O 8 — **78**

This one's tough. I really love the theme, I think the humor is awesome, and there's no denying the depth and size of the quest, but (here it comes)... the graphics and play mechanics are way too 16-bit. Let me re-iterate... the graphics and play-mechanics are way too *Zombies Ate My Neighbors*. The strange collision detection, those bland colors, and that odd control that I remember from *ZAMN* makes an unwanted return in *Herc's*. Don't get me wrong though, it's a great two-player game with loads of gameplay, cool music, and a ton of charm.

G 7 · C 7 · P 8 · M 8 · O 9 — **78**



Game of the Month

Shining the Holy Ark
Saturn
Sonic Software Planning
Role-Playing

After a wait that seemed like an eternity since *Shining in the Darkness*, *Shining the Holy Ark* couldn't come at a better time. One of the most inspired corridor-based RPGs ever devised will no doubt rekindle each and every Saturn owner's spirit as they await the joy that is coming (*Panzer Azel*, *Bronx*, *Rayearth*, *Silhouette Mirage*, *Grandia*, and *Sonic*). Graphics, music, story, length... all excellent. A must-buy SS experience.

G 9 · C 8 · P 9 · M 9 · O 9 — **90**

I can't tell you how happy I am to see this game. Sega has worked rather quickly translating *StHA* and deserves appreciation for doing so. Let's hope the same rings true for the likes of *Grandia*, *Slayers*, and *Evangelion: 2nd Impression* (whom ever brings them out). *Shining* exhibits everything a corridor RPG should: a brilliant menu system, excellent character design, an engaging story, diverse and unique labyrinths, spectacular spells, and a great soundtrack. Highly recommended.

G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 9 · O 8 — **90**

This is a great, great RPG. I'm a huge fan of all Climax/Sonic adventures, and *Shining the Holy Ark* only confirms their incredible talent. Picture *Shining in the Darkness*, but with real-time polygonal environments, hyper-detailed rendered characters and enemies, and excellent quest elements. "Rendered?" you say. Yeah, I had issues with the renders at first too, but they animate so well, and they look so much like *Shining* characters, that I yield and accept. Besides, the sheer magnitude of this 30+ hour quest, the fundamental quality, class, and charm of this profoundly superior game... all is moot 'cause I'm having a great time.

G 8 · C NA · P 10 · M 9 · O 9 — **94**



Tobal 2
PlayStation (Import)
Square
Fighting/Quest

Visual shock! Sound shock! Gameplay shock!... and just plain shock! *Tobal 2*, possibly the most gorgeous and deep fighter currently available, is not coming to the States! It's understood why *Tobal* didn't sell all that well, but *2* is just so much better. The graphics defy the hardware, the quest mode is massive and again the music is memorable. The two new characters are grand and all return with over twice the fire power, insane combos and juggles, and all new projectiles. But who needs it?

G 10 · C 9 · P 9 · M 9 · O 8 — **95**

Yeah, screw this game. We don't need tripe like this polluting our pristine shores. Can't let those foreigners get a foothold by poisoning our children with bizarre products like this. Who needs 'em, anyway, when we already have the might that is *War Gods*? Um... really, though, *Tobal 2* is surely the pinnacle of PlayStation fighting games... it is the SKILL. Nearly 200 characters. Graphics that should not, cannot exist... but do. The most hardcore bonus feature ever seen in a fighting game, the Quest Mode. Reckonize, and buy this import right now.

G 10 · C 9 · P 9 · M 7 · O 7 — **98**

A fighting game with just under 200 different characters. A strategy that rivals the depth of *Tekken*. Supremely balanced characters, oodles of special moves and a quest mode to die for. The best PlayStation beat-'em-up of the year so far in terms of technical achievement. Did I mention some of the finest CG cut scenes EVER SEEN? Did I mention the lack of polygon glitching? Did I mention the supremely detailed backdrops? Did I mention that Sony isn't releasing this in the States? Did I mention I'm off to Sony HQ with a large pointy stick? SORT IT OUT, PEOPLE!! WE NEED *TOBAL 2*!!!

G 9 · C 10 · P 10 · M 7 · O 9 — **98**



Deep Sea Adventure
PlayStation (Import)
Takara
Role-Playing

Well, it seems no one likes this little game... While I understand the gripes, the game isn't as bad as these guys make out. Yes, the music is pretty dire, the 2D graphics are clearly dated and the gameplay in the 3D sections is lacking pace but the game has a certain charm that manages to distract you from these problem areas. The theme is its saving grace and should you pass this game by (and I'm sure you will) maybe Takara will produce a sequel that solves these issues. I'm just a bit more forgiving 'cause I loved Choro Q2.

G 5 · C 7 · P 6 · M 3 · O 8 — **68**

Let it be known: Shin Rox DESTROYS the games he does not like. Thus Shin Rox has thoroughly smashed and shattered his copy of Deep Sea Adventure, one of the poorest "games" ever introduced to an unsuspecting public. Surely Takara is beta-testing some advanced form of mind control by releasing this game: All who play it will be reduced to gibbering vegetables. One day they'll perfect it to the point where those who come into contact with their games will be left mindless, ready to be collected and shipped to Southeast Asia for organ harvesting, or something... you heard it here first.

G 3 · C 4 · P 5 · M 4 · O 8 — **25**

Wow, this game is poor. I have to give Takara some credit for their unique idea, but the fact that this RPG has underwater elements doesn't even come close to saving it. Why? Well, lets see... The graphics suck, the music is horrid, there's extensive loading and the submarine parts are only mildly fun. POOR! The theme is cool though, and if Takara ever does create an improved sequel, it'll definitely be worth checking out. For now though, I'll stick to land-based titles for my RPG enjoyment...

G 3 · C 5 · P 6 · M 1 · O 9 — **30**



Groove on Fight
Saturn (Import)
Atlus
Fighting (Ram Cart)

Groove on Fight definitely has hot art but it moves like a silent movie. Sad, given the game's graphic appeal and engaging cast of characters. If you can overlook the frame rate however, the speed setting is good and the gameplay, not bad. If nothing else, it's an extremely well art directed game that won't likely see the light of day in the US. If you don't have a RAM cart, be sure and purchase the box set or you'll be stuck with only a cool lookin' manual.

G 8 · C 8 · P 7 · M 7 · O 5 — **70**

While Capcom and SNK have nothing to fear from Atlus' new fighting game title, *Groove On Fight* is a cool little game. Okay, so it's a bit lacking in the character animation department (everything can't be *SF3*, you know), and it's super-move system is FAR too abuse-able. But it's got stunningly beautiful character designs (Solis' outfit ... ouch), solid yet wacky gameplay, a truly insane intro, and best of all, it's four player simul.! If you already own the required fighting games, such as *SFA2* and *KOF'96*, give *GOF* a go. It's groooooovy.

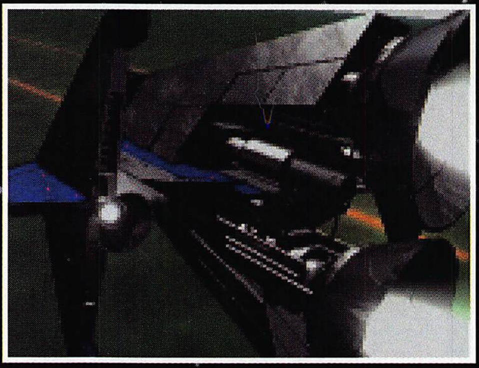
G 7 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 8 — **80**

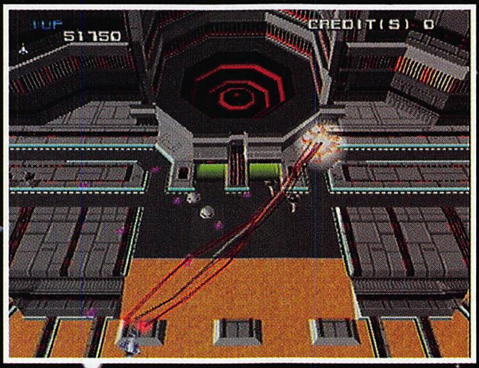
Whew, look at that cover! You know this game is the hot stuff... Jeeyah, throw down that mad RAM cart... Uh... Um... huh?? Non-stop problems. Sure, we know that four characters have to be in RAM at once, but THREE MEGABYTES of storage space gets us this?? These characters are animated as poorly as the original SNES *SFII*, and the game constantly loads. Always. For long amounts of time. Idea: Trick a friend into buying it, then get a color xerox of the cover.

G 6 · C 6 · P 6 · M 7 · O 7 — **65**

SPACE HAS ALWAYS HAD THREE DIMENSIONS.

SO WHY HAVE SHOOTER GAMES ONLY GIVEN YOU TWO?







Introducing a new dimension in shooters - Xevious 3D/G+. A spectacular 3D shoot-fest, where it's you and all your new, improved interstellar weaponry against an entire galaxy of tough, nasty aliens. You get Xevious 3D/G, plus three other classic Xevious games. (Little alien caskets sold separately.)

PlayStation

KIDS TO ADULTS K-A CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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XEVIOUS 3D/G+

FINAL FANTASY VII

BEHIND THE SCENES REPORT

GameFan recently visited Square's newly opened Honolulu office to discuss Final Fantasy VII with five of the game's key creators.

INTERVIEW #1
Hironobu Sakaguchi
President of Square USA, Inc.

Brief Profile: Since the establishment of Square (previously Denyu Co. Ltd.) Mr. Sakaguchi has been involved in game production, and in 1987, he released the first title of the Final Fantasy series. Mr. Sakaguchi was the producer for all the Final Fantasy games that followed and he now works as the Senior Chief Executive of all game development.

GF: What was your reason behind opening up an office in LA and Honolulu?

HS: As you know from looking at FFVII, we use quite a lot of high end computer graphics, and most of the talent pool for that field is in the United States, particularly Hollywood.

GF: There were some rumors about an extra quest on the third disk planned concerning the resurrection of a certain character, and that it never happened due to time constraints. Do you have any comments regarding this rumor?

HS: I am familiar with that rumor, and I'm afraid that it's not true (laughs...) I thought you were going to ask about the N64 version of FFVII, which is another rumor that I hear often.

GF: Are there any future plans for a version of Final Fantasy on any Nintendo platform? Maybe the 64DD?

HS: No.

GF: Are you completely satisfied with the way FFVII turned out?

HS: In retrospect, I think everyone looks back at places where the game could have been improved, but overall I am happy with the way it turned out. However, with the release of the America version I think we have been able to make substantial improvements in the game.

GF: Tell us about the American version?

HS: One of our main goals with FFVII was to make sure that is was a success in the United States. I was surprised at how many Americans liked FFVI, and I wanted to make FFVII even more popular. So it wouldn't suffice just to convert the game, we actually had to make substantial improvements.

GF: What improvements?

HS: We added two more bosses toward the end of the game and the Materia System has been changed to make it more user friendly. The enemy encounter rates have also been adjusted so the story line and battles are more balanced. Also at certain points you'll have bosses with weaknesses that are hard to work out, and we've added hint messages to aid the player.

GF: How do you view the American gaming scene with regards to RPGs?

HS: Up till now RPGs have been considered as too complicated for the American audience. I think that their complexity has affected their popularity. But there have been significant visual developments in games, and I hope this will help FFVII to grab the attention of the American audience, maybe even those who aren't predisposed towards RPGs. Then, once they take a look at the game, they will see its merits and hopefully be drawn into its world. I think FFVII could well be the game to help build the market for RPGs.

GF: Are there any plans to make a PC version of FFVII?

HS: Yes, we plan to make PC versions of FFV, FFVI, and FFVII. Of course, porting takes a long time, so it will be approximately a year until the PC versions are available.

GF: You have spent a lot of time building this game series on various gaming platforms. What drew you to make FFVII on Sony PlayStation?

HS: I think the major consideration was the storage capacity of the hardware. The total capacity of FFVII is 1800MB. If you're familiar with the capacity of a single cartridge, it's only 8MB—so we were severely hampered by what we could do on that medium. We chose to go with the technology that allowed us 600MB per CD. Also, we were interested in going with a platform that already had a large installation base.

GF: Do you know what platform the next Final Fantasy game will be made on? Will they be released on the PlayStation or a new hardware system?

HS: Final Fantasy VIII will be on the PlayStation.

GF: Will FFVIII continue from the point where FFVII ended, or will it be different?

HS: FFVIII will be a completely new story based on completely different characters..

GF: Will there be any returning characters from any previous Final Fantasy games?

HS: The character Cid will reappear in a different form... and Chocobo will also appear.

GF: Since Cid has made an appearance in every Final Fantasy game since FFII, does he have a special meaning to you?

HS: Well, there really isn't any deep meaning to it, we just wanted to make a character that would appear in various forms in all the games. I guess I've always had a soft spot for that type of character. Cid is like Yoda from the Star Wars series—very intelligent and wise.

GF: When will FFVIII be finished?

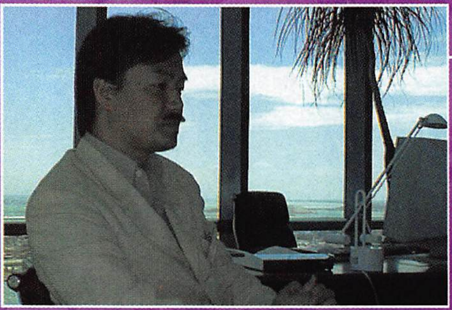
HS: Sometime next year.

GF: Have any Hollywood studios approached you about making a major motion picture based on the Final Fantasy series?

HS: I am actually in negotiations with several studios right now, but I can't disclose any information at this time.

GF: Can you tell us anything about the movie at all?

HS: It will be a full computer graphic motion picture along the lines of Toy Story—we've even recruited some of the staff who worked on Toy Story. The next phase is to make an amalgamation between the game and the movie. Hopefully, we'll be able to achieve this on the next generation of console systems, so it will be about 4 years before we actually start realizing some of our long time goals.



HIRONOBU SAKAGUCHI *President of Square USA, Inc.*

"...I wanted to make FFVII even more popular. So it wouldn't suffice just to convert the game, we actually had to make substantial improvements."



Kazuyuki Hashimoto

"I am currently working on the Final Fantasy film project..."

"FFVIII will be a completely new story based on completely different characters."

Kazuyuki Hashimoto



***Planning and Character Design* TETSUYA NOMURA**

"...I am working on new monsters for the American version of FFVII. There will be at least two new 'Weapons' (monsters)."

INTERVIEW #2
Kazuyuki Hashimoto
Vice President of Research & Development

Brief Profile: Mr. Hashimoto was the CG Programmer for Final Fantasy VII, responsible for the development of the 3D CG system programming tools for the PlayStation, and also the animation data conversion.

GF: Have you been involved in any of the other Final Fantasy games?
KH: No, I joined the Square team about two years ago.
GF: What about the current and future Final Fantasy projects, will you be involved with those?
KH: I am currently working on the Final Fantasy film project, which will probably take us two or three years to complete.
GF: Will it contain any characters from Final Fantasy VII?
KH: No, it will be totally different from Final Fantasy VII. It will be a totally new design.
GF: Will the movie be based on the new Final Fantasy game that is currently in the works?
KH: We haven't reached that stage of planning yet. We're still just trying to make a truly realistic 3D character in CG!
GF: What games have you worked on besides Final Fantasy VII?
KH: Recently I worked for a company making the computer graphics for a game called Motor Toon GP. The game has deformation graphics; I made the tool that allowed for the deformation of the cars.

INTERVIEW #3
Yusuke Naora
Graphics

Brief Profile: Mr. Naora acted as Chief of Graphics for FFVII, directing the whole process but mainly overseeing the background graphics. He created unique "new worlds" such as the City of Midgar and Junon in Final Fantasy VII.

GF: Where did you get your inspiration for the new worlds in FFVII?
YN: The initial idea might be a word or a phrase from the director or character designer, and from that I work with the other designers to create the worlds.
GF: How many other artists or graphic designers did you work with on FFVII?
YN: For the city of Midgar, I worked with five artists total—two manual designers and three computer graphic designers. For Junon, I worked with one other person.
GF: Do you come from a background of manual art or computer generated art?
YN: My specialty is in manual art.
GF: Are there any artists, specifically Japanese artists, that influence your work?
YN: There is one Japanese artist that has influenced my work—Katsuhiro Otomo.
GF: What other video games have you worked on?
YN: I worked on FFVI and I also did a little work on Chrono Trigger.
GF: How long did it take to complete FFVII from start to finish?
YN: From the initial brainstorm, it took about three years to complete.

INTERVIEW #4
Tetsuya Nomura
Planning and Character Design

Brief Profile: After overseeing the monster designs for Final Fantasy V, Mr. Nomura was responsible for the creation of several new characters in Final Fantasy VI. In Final Fantasy VII, Mr. Nomura was both in charge of character design and the game's ending.

GF: Who are your influences?
TN: There is not just one influence, my work is mostly based on my past experiences.
GF: What is your favorite monster in FFVII?
TN: It's Yin and Yang in the Shin-Ra mansion.
GF: How do you come up with the monsters in FF?
TN: First I think about the attacks of the monsters, then I base it on relationships with living things.
GF: Are you working on the next Final Fantasy game?
TN: Not right now, I am working on the new monsters for the American version of FFVII.
GF: How many new monsters are there going to be?
TN: There will be at least two new 'Weapons' (monsters).
GF: Did you work with Yoshitaka Amano at all, or will he be working on any future projects?
TN: Yes, Mr. Amano contributed to FFVII and as long as Final Fantasy continues Mr. Amano will be involved.
GF: Do you come from a background of manual art or computer generated art?
TN: As long as there is paper, a mechanical pencil and an eraser, I'll be fine.
GF: What is your favorite character in FFVII?
TN: Cloud and Sephiros.
GF: Do you know why Vincent or Yuffie were not in the ending CG?
TN: Because to have included both of them, we would have to make four different endings and we were constrained by the space on the CD, so we decided not to include them.

INTERVIEW #5
Nobuo Uematsu
Music Composer

Brief Profile: Mr. Uematsu joined Square after working as a freelance composer, where he composed tunes for many television commercials. He has since composed and directed all the music for the Final Fantasy series. In addition, Mr. Uematsu continues to compose and produce game music CDs.

GF: Has the FFVII soundtrack been selling well in Japan since the release?
NU: Yes, it hit #3 in the Japanese music charts for all types of music and it has sold over 200,000 copies. This is the first time that music from a game has placed in the hit charts, so I am very proud of that.
GF: What was it like switching from cartridge to CD?
NU: It became much easier for me. On the SNES we had only eight sound channels, but on PlayStation we have twenty-four sound channels. The sound quality is much better.
GF: Are you working on both the new Final Fantasy game and the movie project?
NU: I am unable to work on the movie project or the new Final Fantasy because I am working on a new project that I can't discuss at this time.
GF: Do you have any musical influences that have inspired the music of FFVII?
NU: I am inspired by all kinds of music all over the world.
GF: Did you use any live instruments when you were composing the music for FFVII or was the music synthesized?
NU: When I began composing the music, I used both live instruments and synthesized music. Then, I put both types of music into the computer to create the game music.



Square headquarters, Hawaii

YUSUKE NAORA *Chief of Graphics*

"The initial idea might be a word or a phrase from the director or character designer, and from that I work with other designers to create the worlds."

Square Headquarters, Hawaii





Music Composer ***NOBUO UEMATSU***

"This is the first time that music from a game has placed in the hit charts, so I am very proud of that."

GRAVEYARD SPECIAL FEATURE: GAMES THAT NEED SEQUELS!

With the *next generation* of next-generation consoles already looming on the horizon, the editors at GameFan feel it's high time for certain game companies to get back to their roots and make 32/64 bit sequels to some of their 8/16 bit classics. We're talking about games that thrived on gameplay:



1. Dynamite Headdy: A testament to ingenious level design and play mechanics! Do it 2D and completely rendered. Headdy and the cast of marionettes would lend themselves perfectly to SGI rendered graphics. Imagine the walls falling in and out as the scenes changed and the insanity of Headdy's bosses, SGI rendered in 3D! The Japanese box art actually depicts such a scene. I know I'm dreaming, but wouldn't it be grand!?
2. Gunstar Heroes: 2D Hand drawn SS!
3. Strider: Do it like *Pandemonium* on the PS and they will come!
4. Bonk's Adventure: Gotta be N64 ala *SM64* all the way! Imagine chomping up cliffs and trees in 3D!
5. Ranger X: 2D ala *Clockwork Knight* all the way. Multi-jointed rendered lead and enemy characters blended with lush, hand drawn scenery, rich with parallax, and all the FX you can muster. It'll fly off the shelves!
6. Ninja Gaiden: 2D hand drawn. Same small character and big levels filled with paramount challenge. Imagine what real weather effects and light sourcing would bring to this epic platformer!
7. Splatterhouse: Make it 3D ala Crash (so you can slice and dice in both directions) while retaining super high quality textures. Don't forget the chainsaw, and keep it bloody!
8. Act Raiser: 2D hand drawn, of course, in the vein of *Castlevania X*. Find Yuzo, knock him back to his senses and have him craft the joy soundtrack.
9. Battletoads: I don't care how you make it, just *make* it.
10. Atomic Robo Kid: Gotta go with the *Crash* Engine on this one too. Just make the tubes wider and taller, and add the ability climb and ascend within them. As he rises (or ascends) have the area behind him go transparent to view the action.

Sequels I'm happy about so far: *Castlevania X SotN*, the new 3D *Sonic* (whatever it's called), *Yoshi 64*, *SM64*, *Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha*, *Darius Gaiden*, *Metal Gear*, *Zelda*, and *FF7*.





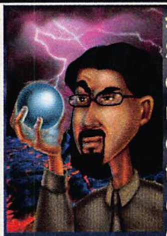
1. Ghouls 'n Ghosts: I want to see *Ghouls 'n Gargoyles* on Capcom's CPS3 hardware!! It would be a 2D extravaganza with level design influenced by all three *G&G* games. Gameplay would be a mixture of *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* (vertical firing) and *Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts* (the double jump). There would be multiple paths to Loki's castle, new weapons, new characters (play as Lancelot or Percival perhaps?) and new types of armor, including magic armor that lets you momentarily morph into other creatures like Zombies and Red Aremars! Also, the wizard would occasionally turn you into a random Capcom character! *sigh* If only...
2. Gunstar Heroes: A 2.5D *Gunstar Heroes* with effects from the Gods!
3. Sonic: A 32-bit 2D *Sonic* needs to exist. Keep it pure, like *Sonic* and *Sonic CD*.
4. Castle of Illusion: A true 2D sequel on SS. Two player like *World Of Illusion* only longer and harder. Oh yes!
5. Y'S Vanished Omens: Either a compilation CD with updated graphics or an all new *Y's*. I must have more!
6. Final Fight: The finest scrolling beat 'em up EVER needs a PROPER sequel. None of this SNES crap.
7. Bionic Commando: You know, I'd settle for just an arcade-perfect port...
8. Contra: Konami did a true 2D 32-bit *Castlevania*, why not *Contra*?
9. Total Carnage: Am I alone in my love for this game? It needs a sequel!!
10. Shinobi: A proper hand-drawn *Shinobi*, like *Revenge of Shinobi*. Those FMV sections have got to go.

Sequels I'm happy about so far: *Assault Suit Leynos*, *Castlevania*, *Metal Gear*, *FF*, *Thunderforce*, *Mario*, *Zelda*, *StarFox*



1. Phantasy Star: You better believe it baby. Imagine... PSV. Actually, don't imagine. You'll only get depressed. I know it's not happening, 'cause I recently learned that the *Phantasy Star* character-designin' *man*, Yoshibon, is doing touch-up work on the home version of *Last Bronx*, or something. But think about it! *Phantasy Earth*, taking place after the Alyssa III landed on "the third planet from the sun." Aaaah! Mustn't think about it!! Too hardcore!! Rieko "Phoenix Rie" Kodama, come back!!
2. Y's: Now this one is kind of happening, with the *Falcom Classics Collection* on Saturn and *Y's Eternal* on PC... but I want *Y's VI*.
3. Monster World: Ah, the *Monster World* series. Gone forever. Four of the best games ever made, truly. Now all Compile makes is *Puyo Puyo*. "Nomiso Kone Kone," indeed!
4. Sorcerian: This *has* to come back. Life isn't complete without *Sorcerian*. A remake of the original is coming for Win'95, but...
5. Nectaris: It's all about that sound when the next turn comes up... "b-wohhng..."
6. Exile: The Crusades rocked with skill in this series! This awesome PC-Engine action RPG series is long gone. Amazingly, all of 'em came out in the US, even the *Genesis Exile*! Find them somewhere!
7. Valis: Yuko!!
8. Alex Kidd: Where's the Kidd? He was infinitely cooler than Sonic. Jan, ken, pon!!
9. Seiken Densetsu: Square still hasn't announced a *Seiken IV*!! Whattup?? Where's Hiroki Kikuta?? Please, make it hand-drawn.
10. Clash At Demonhead: I know nobody remembers this one, but it was 100% NES action adventure skill gaming, and it was called "Big Bang" in Japan. Need another one!
Note: I KNOW I'm forgetting many important NES, MegaDrive and especially PC Engine games, but: a) It's very, very late... 5:27am. b) I didn't want to have too much overlap with other people and c) We were of course limited to ten titles.

Sequels I'm happy about so far: *Dracula X*, *Street Fighter II*, *Final Fantasy VI*, *Lunar* (kind of... where's *III*?) *Tengai Makyo*, *Dragon Quest VI* (*VII*'s comin', baby...) *MegaMan 7*, and so many more... no more space!!



1. 2D Contra: Some may be confused by my number one choice. I know that a 32-bit *Contra* already exists, but it's difficult for me to accept the non-Konami developed, 3D *Contra: LOW* as a true update of one of the bona fide classics of 8bit. In fact, the disappointing 3D version only increased my desire for an intense 32-bit 2D version that much more. Imagine a new *Contra* as ambitious as their PS *Castlevania*. *That* I would like to see very, very much.
2. Bionic Commando: An old fave, I would love to see *BC* and its swinging mechanic updated in 32-bit 2D glory.
3. Phantasy Star: This milestone of the SMS and indeed, Sega themselves, sorely need a new sequel.
4. Gradius: Konami's classic 2D shooter should not be forgotten. Possibly a 3D update?
5. Gunstar Heroes: How could anyone not want to see Treasure's brilliant *Gunstar* with insane hand drawn graphics and thousands of colors.
6. Ninja Gaiden: A blast from Tecmo's past, this deserves the next generation treatment.
7. Outrun: I must see a polygonal Ferrari with my girlfriend being thrown clear.
8. ThunderBlade: Make it real time on Model 3. There aren't nearly enough *Blue Thunder* rips these days.
9. Golgo 13: This "Professional" style game from back in the day would be amazing with state-of-the-art sound and graphics.
10. Miner 2049er: Just for laughs.

Sequels I'm happy about so far: *StarFox*, *Castlevania*, *Thunderforce*, *Mario*

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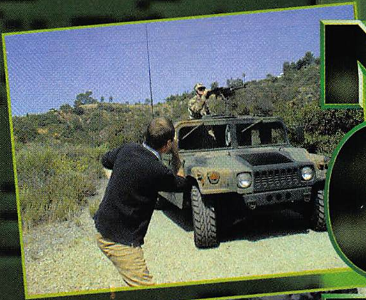
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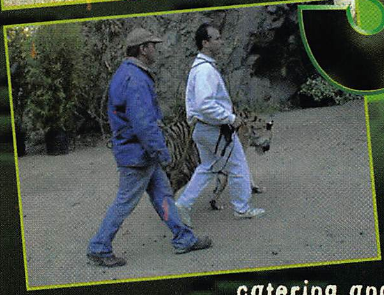
IN DEVELOPMENT

ELECTRONIC ARTS SHOOTS HOT FMV FOOTAGE FOR THEIR FORTHCOMING SEQUEL TO THE SUCCESSFUL SOVIET STRIKE ON THE PLAYSTATION. AND GAMEFAN WAS THERE...



NUCLEAR STRIKE







Up at the rare crack of dawn, I trekked on down to Bronson Cave (used in the campy Batman series of the 60's, starring Adam West) to watch the taping of a tiger attack which will be featured in the FMV of EA's Nuclear Strike. Amidst the de rigueur catering and a potentially dangerous feline, I sat down with Nuclear Strike's producer, Michael Kosaka, and discussed some of the finer points of making the new "Strike" game.

GF: For starters, how long have you been with EA, Michael?
MK: Oh, since about '87. Prior to that I worked as a game designer and art director at Epyx. Before that I was at Atari, as most people in the area were. And before that even, I worked with a group called Penguin Software out of Illinois. But that's going way, way back.

GF: So let's get right to it. What's the backdrop of Nuclear Strike?
MK: Basically, there's a madman with a nuke who wants to do the world in. That's the basic storyline. Uh, we're set in five different locations ranging from Asian jungle to Siberia. We're all over the place.

GF: How many people are working on Nuclear Strike?
MK: The current count is about fifty at this point. It's a fairly good size team.

GF: Has the engine been improved over Soviet Strike, and if so, to what extent?
MK: Well, we went back and found a lot of places we could improve, which is one of the advantages of having such a good engine to start with and programmers who are well versed in their product. I think you'll be really impressed by the final result as it's been improved a lot. You're gonna see a huge increase in the frame rate and the smoothness of the motion. We also have better AI routines. We went back and basically polished it up and we were able to build off the base that we had in Soviet Strike. So we're real thrilled with what we came up with. There are some new views and you're gonna be able to play different vehicles as well.



I sat down with Nuclear Strike's producer, Michael Kosaka, and discussed some of the finer points of making the new "Strike" game.

GF: In addition to the chopper?
MK: Well we will have a wide variety of choppers but we also have ground and other air vehicles.

GF: I saw a shot of a Harrier.
MK: Yes, there's a Harrier involved. Um, we've got a few other surprises too. Basically you're gonna be able to play as a lot of different stuff. And the views are, well, you're not gonna ever be in the cockpit, it's just not that kind of game. But you will be able to change camera angles.

GF: Will NS offer a greater field of view than SS? Some complained that you couldn't see enough of the surrounding terrain and were constantly being bombarded by enemies that were off screen.
MK: You're right. Um, we're going to attack that problem a couple of different ways. One, the view will change slightly depending on what vehicle you're in. Two, we're going to give you a local tactical radar which will be on your HUD. So you'll be able to see dots around you, stuff that's shooting at you from behind and things like that. We're also going to have a new compass indicator which will sort of tell you where you're headed, where the next mission is. So you know, we really listened to what people were coming back with on SS and tried to fix it.

GF: Besides the new vehicles, how does NS differ from SS?
MK: Well there's a greater variety of missions, and hopefully we've got the same mix of strategy and action that we had before, or even better. You know we took some hits for being too hard. Uh, we're looking at that really closely.

GF: How have you addressed the difficulty issue?
MK: Well, we're just looking at ways to make the game not necessarily easier for the

THE FIRST NUCLEAR STRIKE SHOTS FOR THE PLAYSTATION!







EA's venerable "Strike" series continues on with its latest 32bit incarnation, Nuclear Strike. Taking an almost cinematic approach with its storyline in which a lone madman has possession of a nuclear weapon, EA is attempting to appeal to a broader audience with Nuclear Strike.
Featuring a greatly enhanced version of the Soviet Strike engine, NS promises a much improved frame rate over the original. With new air and land based vehicles, a more intuitive and simple interface, and easier target management, Nuclear Strike does indeed seem to be headed down the road of mass acceptance.

player, but just more accessible, easier to pick up and play. But we still wanna keep the core players who have stayed with us for the long run.

GF: What have you implemented along those lines?
MK: Well we've put in some clues, a lot more visual and audible cues. Um, like I said, we'll be addressing the HUD so that all of your information will be right there. We've got the interface and we're gonna clean that up a little bit, make it look a little cleaner. We've improved it across the board. You know, it's the same core group that worked on Soviet, so we're building on their expertise. It's the same artists, programmers, and designers. So these are guys who are veterans, so they can just jump on the next one and start adding even more stuff. A lot of the stuff we couldn't fit in SS is going in this one.

GF: Will NS feature the same level of detail in regards to the topography and terrain maps?
MK: Oh, absolutely. And with the same artist, it looks even better. We have other stuff happening in the terrain as well, like we're going to be cratering the ground. We've already got it working and it's hot.





Watch old school stunt man Monty wrestle with the tiger, all in the name of exciting FMV. Some of you may remember Monty from his stuntwork in Francis Ford Coppola's Bram Stoker's Dracula.



GF: How many different vehicles total?
MK: The party line right now is five to seven just to be on the safe side. A lot of the stuff we've got in and running. We're tuning it and if it's not fun we're not going to leave it in. We may very well go over that number, but we're not going to put anything in that's not fun.

GF: Outside of a Harrier, what other types of non VTOL aircraft can you feature?
MK: You know that's one of the problems with the engine; fast moving jets are going to be a problem because you don't have time to react. Stuff is on screen before you can do anything about it. Urban Strike had an F-117, and some people had fun with that. We're still tweaking it and I can't say what types of jets will make it into the final. We're pre-alpha by a long way, so we'll just have to see what works and what doesn't. But the Harrier is cool and will definitely work because it's a VTOL.

GF: How about the music.
MK: The same composers are back. We've got a lot of rich material to draw from as far as the environments and stuff.

GF: Still one player only?
MK: It'll still be one player. We are coming out with a PC version which will be multiplayer.

GF: Are there any plans for a Saturn or N64 version?
MK: Not at this time, it's sort of up in the air. For now, it'll be PS and PC only.

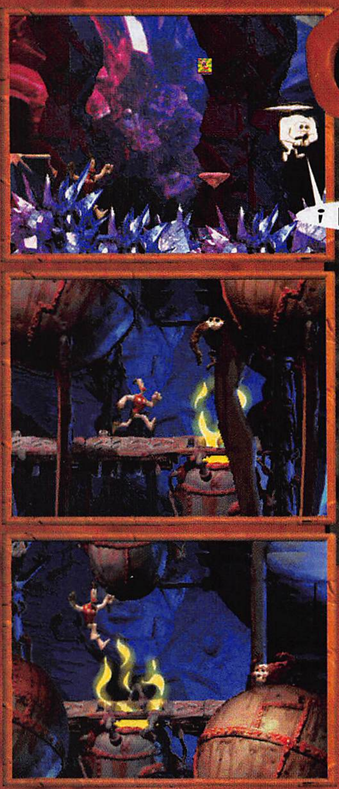
GF: Thank you very much for your time. Now get back to work.
MK: Thank you, and I will.

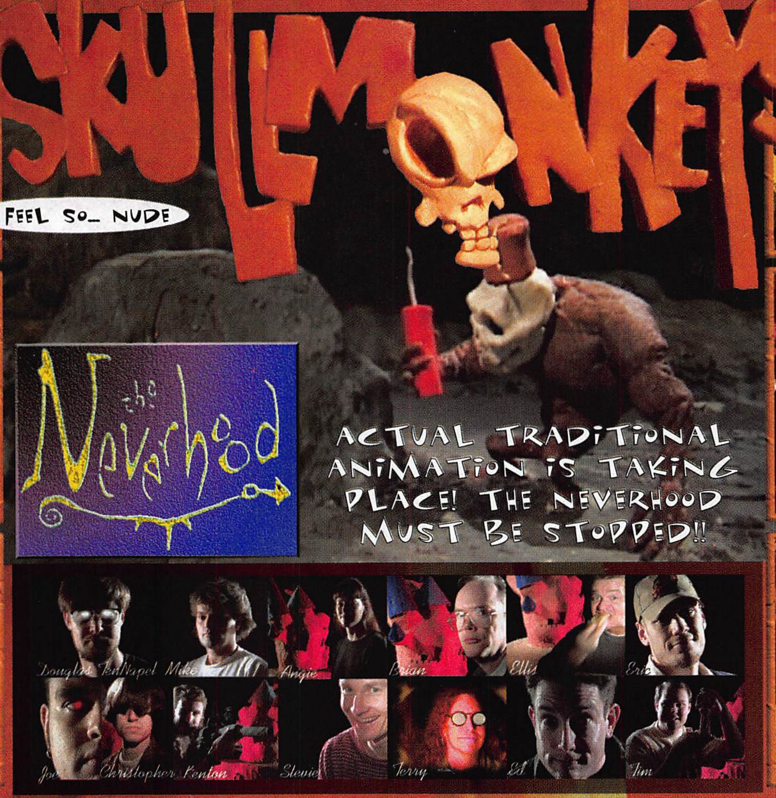
EA's venerable "Strike" series continues forward with Nuclear Strike, the second 32-bit "Strike" game to be released for home consoles.

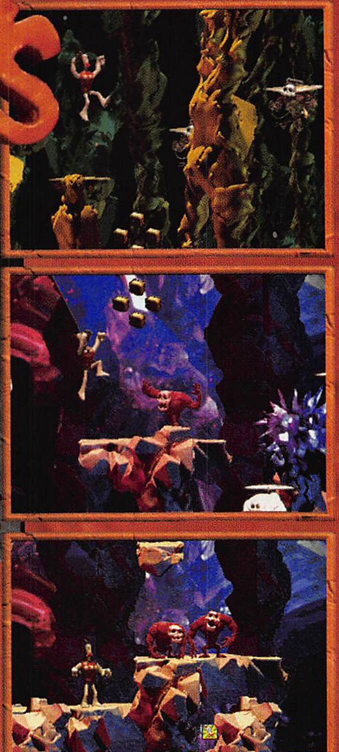
Answering criticisms leveled by some towards Soviet Strike, NS is designed to be smoother and easier to pick up and play than its predecessor.

Though only about 10 percent complete at this point and further weeks of shooting for the FMV (even traveling to exotic Thailand for some authenticity) remaining, NS should shape up quite well. Keep reading GameFan for the latest on EA's newest "Strike."

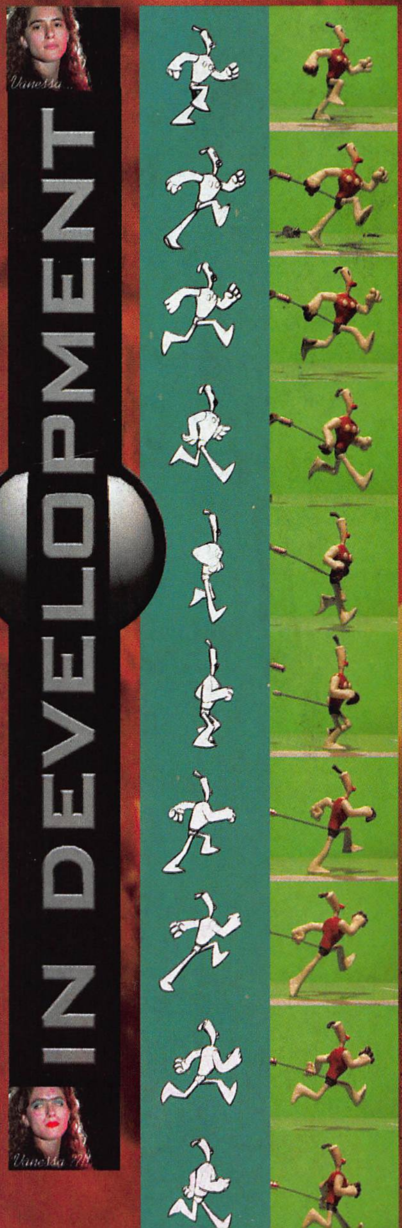
SKULLMONKEYS







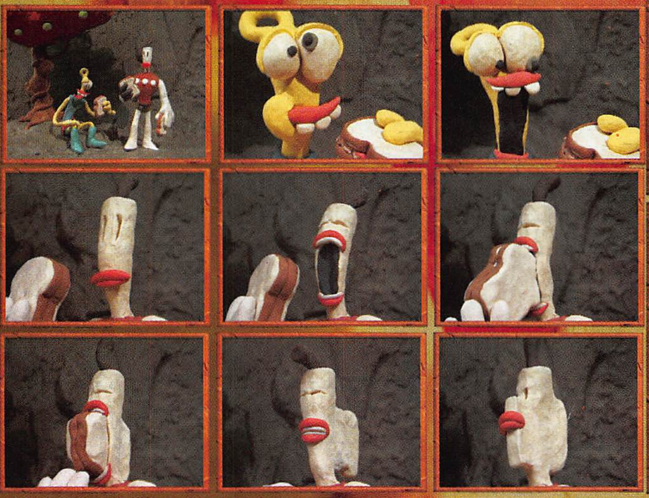
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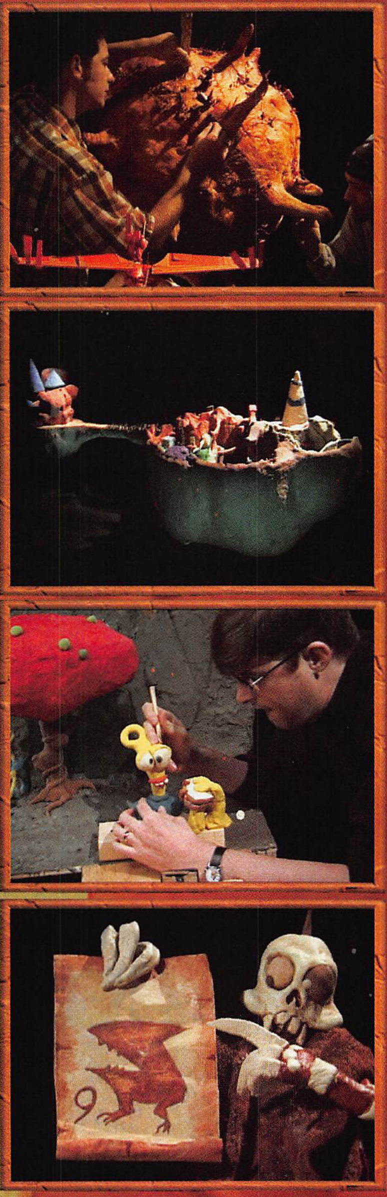






With traditional animation on the endangered games list, along with heart stopping 2D, the Neverhood, a band of dedicated ultra-talented designers, animators, and programmers, is indeed a warm and fuzzy sight on the horizon. Their first PS platformer, "*Skullmonkeys*" features over 100 levels (yep, 100!) and, er, lots of Skullmonkeys! Of course there's billions of frames of traditional animation wrapped in clay, huge joy filled levels crafted by hand, precision gameplay, and burnin puppet animations between levels, but really, it's all about *Skullmonkeys*! From the mind that brought us *Earthworm Jim*, the grooviest *Lumbricus terrestris* to ever grace a screen, comes characters like Klaymen, a head bouncin,' clay shootin,' uh, thing; Willie Trombone, Klaymen's retarded helper and guide (hey! just like Crackhead Bob!); Klogg, Klaymen's evil twin; and Jerry-O, the last good Skullmonkey... We'll have a BIG feature in the August GF! Don't miss it!

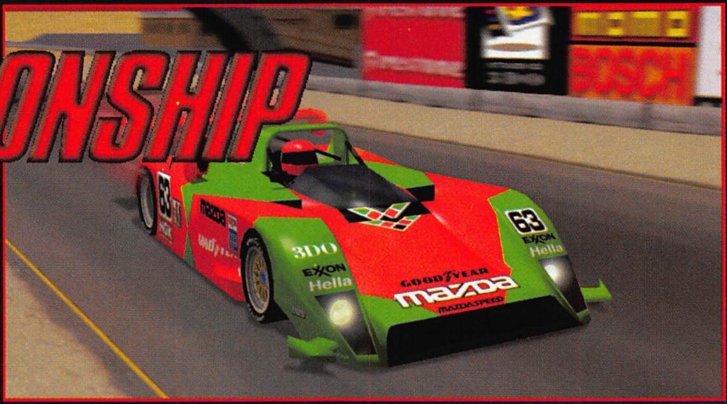





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WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACING

THE FIRST M2 GAME REVEALED!



Studio 3DO has emerged (phoenix-like) from the flames of the burning dodo console and are scorching a new name for themselves with a truly mind-boggling release for the M2. Should the M2 ever actually appear, you'll be pleased to know that there'll be a phenomenal racing game waiting to be released with it. Of course, further proof is needed, so let us delve deeper into the mysterious world of *World Championship Racing*. [Note that all shots are actual shots running on M2 development hardware, and although we weren't allowed to see the system (it was covered in true David Copperfield tradition with a black silk cloth) we saw no evidence of closet-sized super-computers helping out]

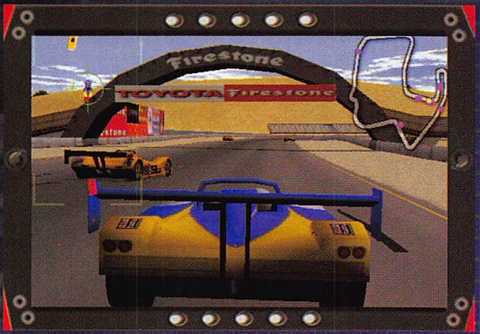
Okay, here's the beef! This is a one player arcade racer featuring a real-time rendered 3D world, employing mip mapping, gouraud shading, alpha channeling and z-buffering capabilities. Cool jargon, eh? This means you'll have almost rendered-intro quality graphics throughout the entire experience. And I write 'experience' because this certainly looks visually more impressive than anything on the market today. Let's get to the most important point: pop-up. There isn't any. Really. None. No, really. After that shock, I viewed the cars during the game; they're between 700 and 900 polygons (less when distant) and look amazing. Not quite as amazing as the showroom cars which weigh in at 2500 polygons and look real. No, really real. These cars form the mammoth MPEG video sequences which the game is packed with (showing cars, cool scenes and astounding fly-bys of the courses), coupled with outstanding red book audio with Doppler effects (crescendos on incoming cars). Take note, cartridge lovers: This is what a four-speed CD system with 8 MB of RAM can accomplish!

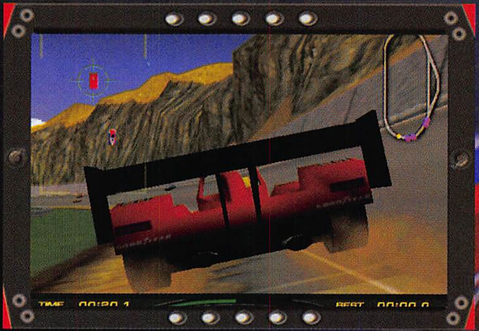


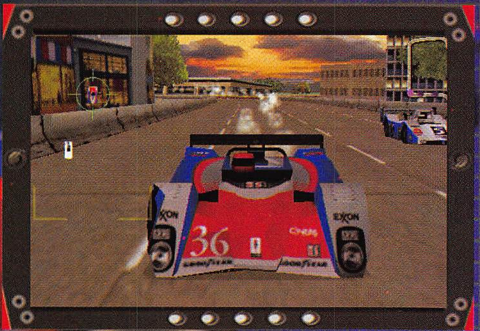
The game features analog control, four different perspectives, four pantaloon-soilingly realistic tracks (such as Laguna Seca, Suzuki Raceway, New Orleans and an oval raceway), extra 'Easter eggs' which lead to special fantasy tracks, and those real-time physics which everyone's getting very excited about. What this means to you and me is cool track damage, pixel-accurate shadows, dust thrown up by wheels and tire skids which remain on the track. Just for those craving the ultimate racing battle, there's six different computer AIs which react to your position and actions.

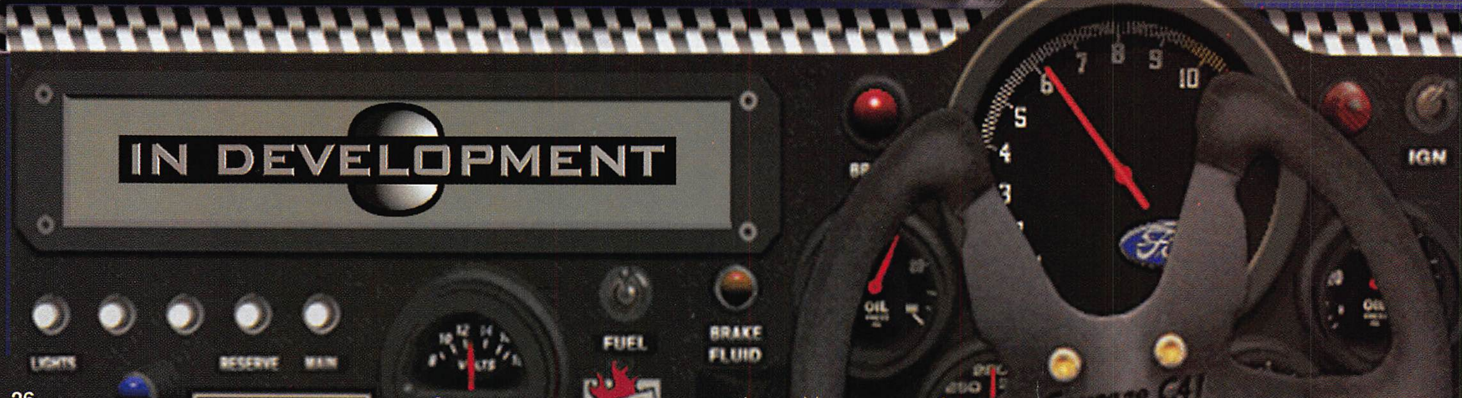
Finally (as I'm rapidly running out of space), there's car damage, a cool *Daytona USA*-style proximity map, a crazed Pit Radio teammate who coaches you throughout the race (no announcers here!), the obligatory rear-view mirror, auto-brakes (should you need them), and just about every moving part in your car is tweakable. Pure unadulterated racing fun is promised. And by the demo we viewed, we're gagging for a final copy. Watch this space... ***CH***












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Pitfall 3D
Beyond The Jungle




In the quest for marketable product, whether it's a game, movie, or TV show, creative minds often mine the past for ideas and concepts. Like so many other 2D games that have come before, *Pitfall* is about to receive the treatment du jour—a 3D version. Not that there haven't already been updates of *Pitfall*. Does anyone remember the FCI *Super Pitfall* on NES? Maybe not, but I'm sure most will recall *The Mayan Adventure*, which appeared on (of all systems) Jaguar, 32X, Sega CD, SNES, and Genesis. *Pitfall 3D* for PlayStation, however, looks to be the most ambitious yet.

The demo we received had but one playable level, but that was enough to get a rough sense of what Activision is going for. If anything, this game's Harry bears more of a resemblance to Indiana Jones than past incarnations. Can't say that's a bad thing.

Pitfall's new 3D world looks pretty good so far, with a smoothly animated Harry running and swinging through a






solid, real time world. With a former member of AM2 working on the game, that's not too surprising. In addition, a moving camera should facilitate some cinematic moments, all the rage these days.

I didn't see any crocodiles in this version, but these classic enemies must surely make an appearance somewhere. What I did encounter were bottomless pits, scorpions, and big rock monsters. As for the classic Harry swing, rest assured, there's plenty of vine swinging to be done in this game. Only this time, you are allowed to swing into or out of the screen. Hey, they don't call this *Pitfall 3D* for nothing.

As I said, we had a very early version, and there is much work to be done. I didn't see anything dreadfully wrong with what they have already, so let's hope that they can deliver a fun game. That is the point, after all. As always, we'll keep you abreast of this game's progress. S



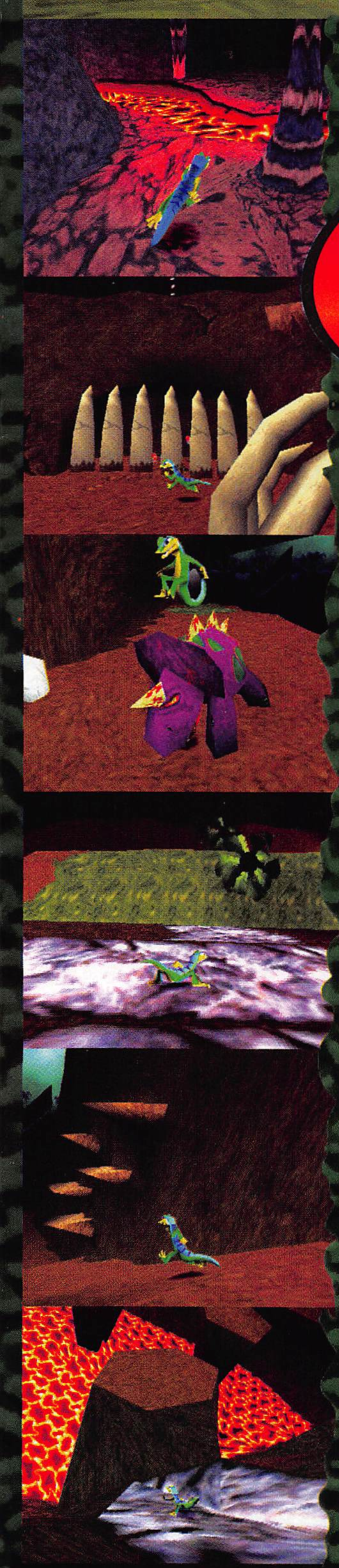






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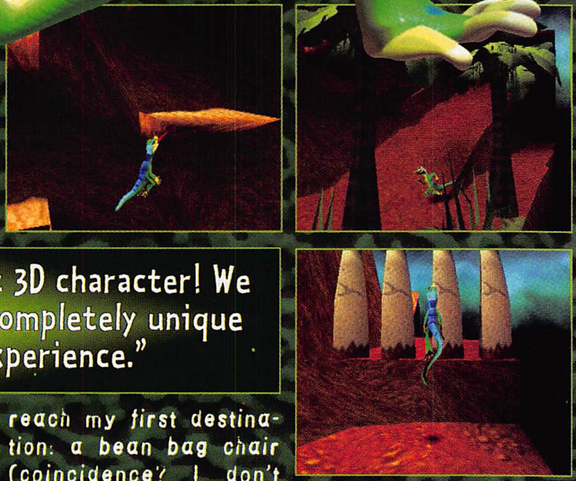
EXCLUSIVE HANDS-ON PREVIEW OF THE PLAYSTATION'S NEXT GREAT PLATFORMING SUPERSTAR...

GEX

ENTER THE GECKO



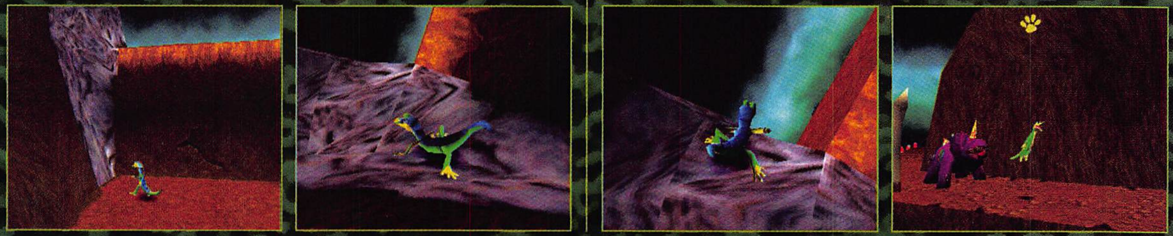
I rarely fly. Soaring thousands of feet above the planet in a glorified poster tube with wings just doesn't sit well with me. I've got too many games to play to risk smashing into the Earth's crust because Bob the pilot had an altercation with the Mrs. last night. But today I'm making an exception. The opportunity to play a revolutionary new 3D platform adventure has arisen and the lure of a new gaming experience is just to enticing to pass up, especially when it's from Crystal Dynamics, a company I feel especially comfortable with. So fly I will. I board the riveted tin cylinder with apprehension, gaze at the pilot... seems chipper enough, and away we go....



"Gex is the perfect 3D character! We give the player a completely unique gameplay experience."

The moment you walk into Crystal Dynamics you know you're in a place where they make video games. There's no parking structure, no elevator, no stuffy lobby. Beyond the Summer Lodge like game room (filled with worn bean-bag chairs and game memorabilia) and past half a mountain goat protruding from a hallway wall, I reach my first destination: a bean bag chair (coincidence? I don't think so), Chip, Steve, Jim... and Gex. But this is not the Gex I once knew. This one is a seamless 3D model, and he's impatiently staring right at me as if to say, go on, give it a try.

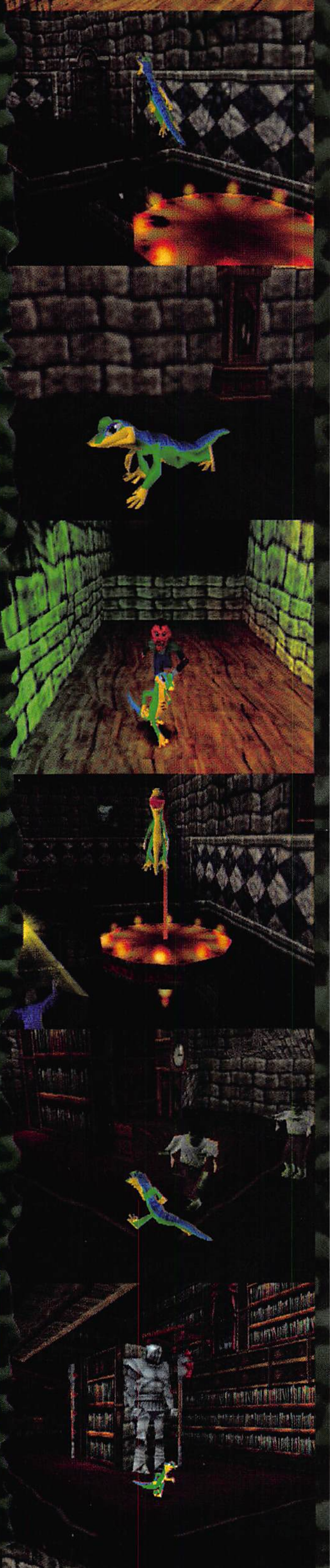
Picking up the analog joystick I immediately realize that waking up at 5:30 and boarding a jet



GEX IS AN ALL-NEW 3D CHARACTER, FEATURING LIZARD SKIN TEXTURING, + 3,400 FRAMES OF INCREDIBLE SGI-RENDERED CHARACTER ANIMATION!







was well worth it. Gex feels amazing, almost real, as Mario did the first time I played SM64, in fact, the feeling is much the same. The Gex model (constructed of over six hundred polygons and wrapped in skin) appears extremely life-like. There's no break-up around the joints (knees, elbows, etc.) and he's colored and shaded astoundingly well... not to mention that he's winking at me. I'm standing in a level that's far from being buttoned up, however; as I take off running, I am amazed.... it's huge, the textures are crisp and it's free roaming. Not only are these playgrounds massive, but they are filled with jaw dropping effects, engaging enemies, and genius play mechanics. Before being wrestled away for a sit down with each team member, I've already arrived at the conclusion that Gex 2: Enter the Gecko will be one of the finest 3D games ever produced. Now it's time to go find out why...

> "We believe that we have the best digital and analog controls. We give the player free roaming control over every angle, not just the eight directions."
> Dan Arey - Lead Designer



HUGE AND UNIQUE BOSSES, BONUS ROUNDS, AND SECRET HIDDEN AREAS + HILARIOUS MULTIPLE HIT ENEMIES THAT CHALLENGE ALL LEVELS OF GAMERS

Let's start with Gex himself. He is the star of the show after all. One of the few games to feature a celebrity voice that actually adds to the game's appeal, Gex is once again brought to life by comedian Dana Gould. With over 500 one-liners and celebrity impressions, Gex will seem more alive than ever as he parodies pop culture, TV, and Hollywood's finest, in a Ferris Bueller sort of way. What brings this to light more than ever is that Gex's jaws are an assembly of actual bones wrapped in skin, so he not only says it, he lip synchs it perfectly. Gex has over 125 unique moves/mannerisms, and 3400 frames of SGI-rendered animation. By looking at him, you'd think the PS had hardware mip-mapping capabilities. He appears seamless even in the most twisted animations. "Flex Gex" real-time collision technology allows Gex to bend around corners and mold to his environment with stunning realism. He looks Mauvelous.



> "We have 'Triple A' animators working furiously to make our characters seem alive and kicking."
> Glen Schofield - Director



ALL-NEW GAME ENGINE PROVIDES BEAUTIFULLY TEXTURED POLYGONS AND 360° CHARACTER CONTROL—ALL AT A CONSTANT 30FPS GAME SPEED!





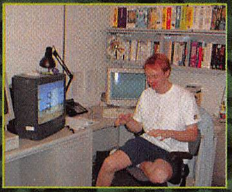


REZ IS BACK AND ONLY GEX CAN STOP HIM! YOU MUST TRAVEL BACK TO THE MEDIA DIMENSION AND SAVE THE WORLD'S TV!!

For Gex, spending his inheritance on a new digital satellite system was the ultimate dream come true. However, locking onto 200 channels of reruns, insect mating rituals (what channel is that on?) and psychic home shopping clubs was not. Still, Gex would not leave his well-worn barka-lounger. that is, until his "must-see TV" faves turned into static. Literally: static.

Suddenly, right out of the movie, these goons in black hats show up from some clandestine federal government agency. It appears that Rez, Gex's arch enemy, has returned, and knocked out the world's TV channels... again! The dudes in the black hats want Gex to return once again into the Media Dimension... guess they really like TV.

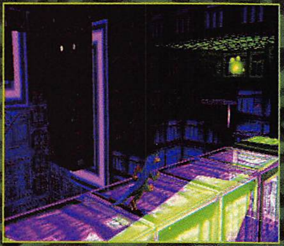
Once deputized into this secret government agency (and rewarded with a cheap tin badge and, of course, a decoder ring), this lab guy, clipboard in tow, shows up with a hot female sidekick by his side. After a series of tests (anal probe not included) Gex is put on a high tech treadmill (sorry Jane, it's motorized). It begins to frantically pick up speed: 10mph... 20mph... 30 mph... then suddenly just as Gex is about to lose it he sees it! Reaching out of the monitor.... Metal. Cold. Sharp! Steel. REZ! Bigger. Badder. Tougher.







Some of the Gex Guys (L to R): Adrian Longland, Lead Programmer; Evan Wells, Senior Game Designer; Eric Elliot, Lead Animator; Mark Miller, Audio/Video Manager; and... Gex!

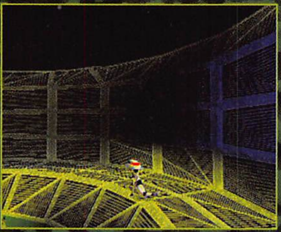
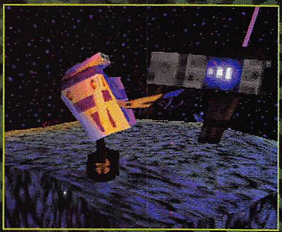
Sticking with the original premise, as all good sequels do, Gex 2 is set in 8 media theme worlds: Prehistoric, Horror, Circuit Central, Space, Twisted Toons, Secret Agent, Kung Foo, and of course Rezopolis... (but you should see Rez now!).

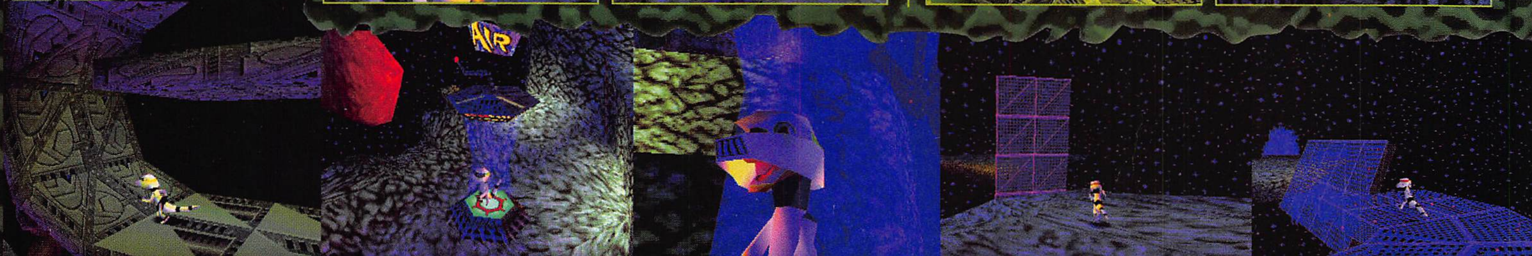
Once you begin to explore these cavernous environments (both open and enclosed), you immediately realize that Gex was made for the 3D genre. Those infamous suction cup feet of his provide many sparkling moments as you turn and twist huge polygonal worlds while stuck to the side of a precipice. The roundhouse tail whip is right at home as well.

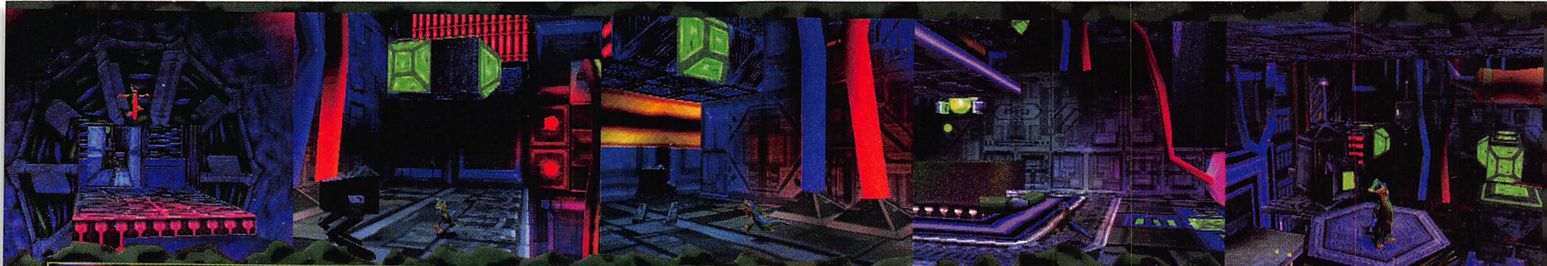
> "We approach each enemy as a mini-boss with multiple states of interaction, attacks and behaviors."
> Dan Arey - Lead Designer

Each level features a three-tiered collectable system. Level specific tidbits are sprinkled cleverly throughout each. Find all 25 of the 1st tier and a 2nd will appear. Clear those and a 3rd will appear. These lead to both secret locales and one of each level's multiple endings. Even Gex' power-ups have been suitably tailored for your 3D pleasure. For instance, when Gex' firepower is present (which produces mind blowing fx), he fries his foe by circling them, creating an inner plume of fire... you can imagine the rest...









The enemies themselves are meticulously thought out as each requires multiple hits to defeat. Chuckie, a resident of the horror stage, comes at you (chuckling hideously), knife in hand. Whack him once and his head pops off... now you've got two problems. Chuckie's body stays alive until the head is killed. And so it goes throughout the adventure. Literally every facet of gameplay is getting similar attention. This is a tightly knit team with one goal in mind: an unforgettable, totally unique 3D adventure for your enjoyment. The creative friendly environment at Crystal lends itself to such an end extremely well; in fact it reminds me a lot of our setup, 'cept it's a lot bigger.

An integral part of making all this work, the cameras (which weren't final for my viewing), are going to be quite revolutionary. The way they're planned to operate is beyond those found in the game Gex will inevitably be compared to, SM64. Hey, all I know is that I saw the PS doing stuff the N64 has not yet accomplished. How they're doing it, well, let's just say that Crystal's always been about quality, but now they want to win! And with this engine (which took over a year to develop) they are certainly headed for victory lane. Texture warping/break-up, a fatal flaw exhibited in the majority of 3D PS games, has been banished, the peripheral vision is incredibly vast, and even in the absence of hardware z-buffering, the textures look almost as good when you're right on top of them as they do far away.



IT'S ALL ABOUT MUSIC

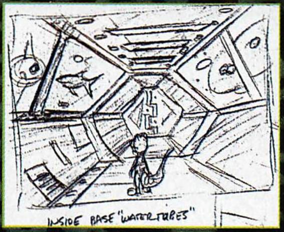
Gex' soundtrack, I'm happy to report, is getting as much attention as the game. Mike Miller, Crystals resident sound guru, tucked away in a huge dimly lit sound proof room amidst a quiver of musical instrumentation, is crafting an inspired soundtrack that heightens as the game becomes more perilous. It's midi, but it sounds redbook. We started to get into how he's doing it and I just couldn't assimilate the info in the allotted time. After a couple of minutes we decided his vast knowledge about game music (and some deal he's got with like, Thomas Dolby) needs to be made public, so we'll feature an interview with Mike next month. It'll be a great read I can assure you.

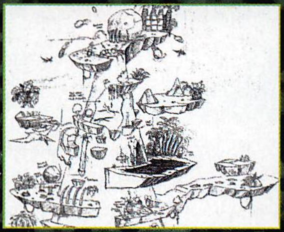


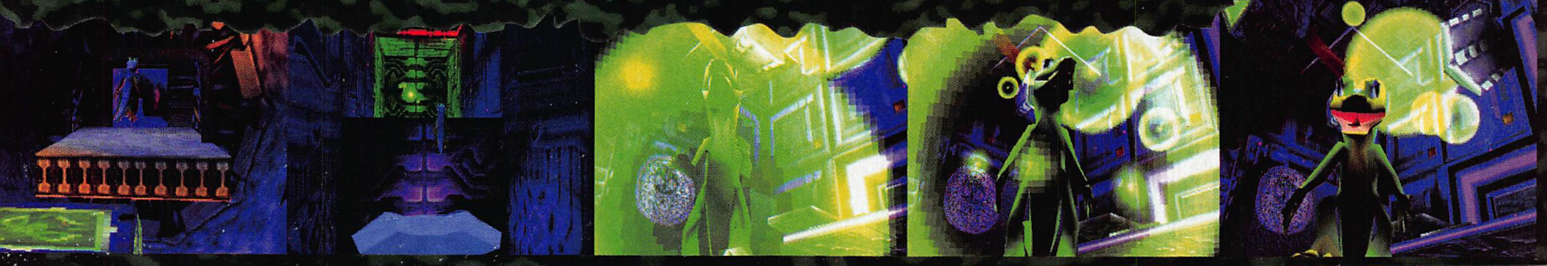
> "We are using a DXF model from 3D Studio around a skeleton from Alias to create characters."
> Glen Schofield - Art Director

WE'VE CREATED A NEW APPROACH TO MAKING GREAT GAMES - IT'S CALLED "SLAVERY"

If I seem enthused, well, it's because I am. Extremely. As one that lives by the platform creed, games like Enter the Gecko keep me glued to gaming. Last year, Crash, Mario, and Lara thrilled me. I considered '96 a very good year. '97, however is shaping up to be a banner year for gaming. Besides most of those mentioned returning, quality 2D gaming has risen again and 3D gaming continues to progress to a level of playability equal to that of 2D as is exhibited herein. As we usher in the third wave of PS software, developers as committed to excellence as the ones at Crystal are a valuable commodity. I truly believe that Gex 2: Enter the Gecko will be one of, if not the years finest. We'll of course bring you updates and new information leading up to the release of Gex 2 this Winter. Oh, by the way, the pilot botched the landing during our approach to the dinky Burbank Airport and then circled like he was playing Ace Combat before finally touching down. Video conferencing needs to reach the next level...

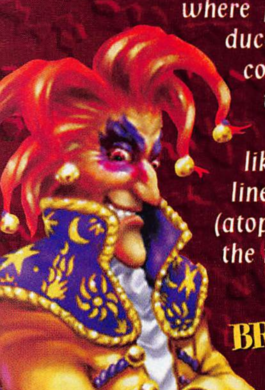


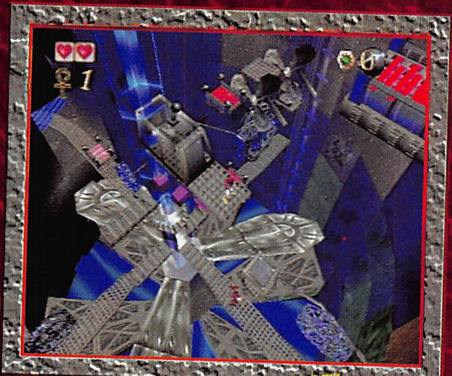




Pandemonium 2

NIKKI AND FARGUS RETURN IN A NEW, WACKY QUEST FOR THE COMET OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES!!









Throughout the day as we ve traveled back and forth from office to office, cube to cube, we ve been passing by the peculiar veiled area where pandemonium 2 is being produced and I keep wondering; what could possibly be in there? When the time arises, we pass finally pass through the renaissance like curtains. Manned computers line the corral with a huge table (atop a Persian rug) in the center of the fort. Hey, it reminded me of a

BREATHTAKING ENVIRONMENTS ARE EVEN MORE PSYCHEDELIC AND BIZARRE THAN BEFORE!!

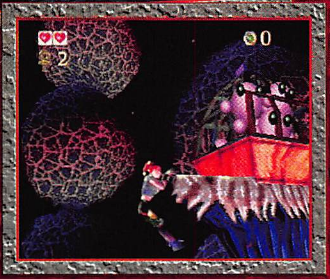




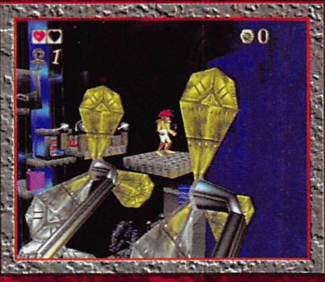


IN-DEPTH GAMEPLAY AT A FRANTIC PACE!









fort. Posters, action figures, you name it... stuff s everywhere. These guys must live here, I think to myself, and again, I flash back to GF where things are much the same. They park me next to Zack Krefting, a Dweezil Zappa like character who wastes no time. He immediately starts demo ing the game on a development system and again, I am amazed.

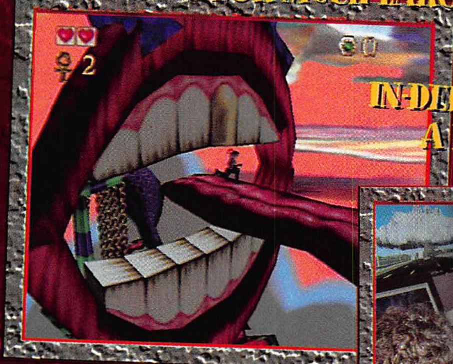
They ve essentially taken Pandemonium s most vivid points (heavy camera work and psychedelic landscapes) and injected them with burning ferocity. The textures are insane, not only in detail, but in shape and color. The gameplay can only be described as frenetic. Vertical, horizontal, down, up, in, and around, Pandemonium 2 is an exercise in extreme motion. Zack quickly explains... The designer behind the first game was apprehensive. He thought we may induce vomi-

GIGANTIC BOSSES THAT STRETCH THE IMAGINATION! THIS DRAGON WILL ASTOUND YOU!!



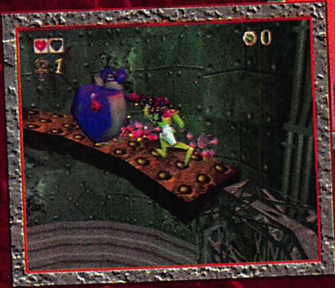



NEW GAME ENGINE ALLOWS FOR MUCH LARGER LEVELS!

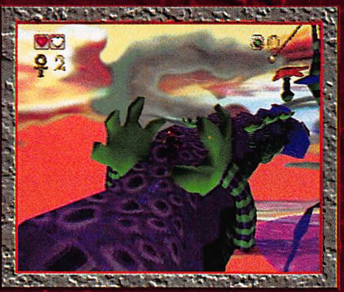
IN-DEPTH GAMEPLAY AT A FRANTIC PACE!

tus erectus (well, he didn t say that exactly), but now, he s gone, and so we re juicing things up a bit. Uh, yeah. I d say that sums it up.



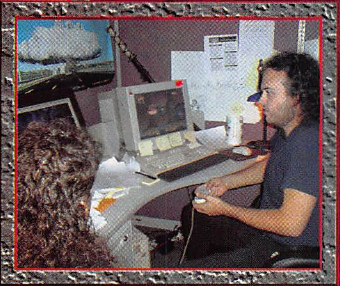
Nikki, once a cute li l chick, has grown up to become a complete hotty-pot. She s, uh, developed! And she has the outfit to prove it. After Pandemonium 2 s opening CG is out Nikki will probably have her own web page. As for Fargus, well, his happy-go-lucky, pseudo-dorkish demeanor has been washed away. The new Fargus is diabolical, troubled... mad. He now beats enemies with Sid who s become a living boomerang and looks like a cross between an Elvis impersonator, Liberace, and the Joker.

Changes in the play mechanics have taken place as well. Nikki and Fargus can now swim, fly, climb, and grapple. And in this environment, trust me, these play mechanics take on a whole new meaning. The method of attack in P2 has also undergone changes. If pumping up enemies until they explode isn t cool enough, grab a power-up and fry them to a crisp. Many such fine methods of disposal are available.

The levels themselves are longer and even more (way more) surrealistic compared to the original, and because they display more geometry there s also more stuff in em. The enemy AI is juiced up respectively, leading to more variety in movement and behavior (but don t worry they still go, Duh.). A total of 21 levels will make the final cut including castles, alien landscapes, and even Fargus brain!

Keeping in line with the original s stunning CG and voice over, P2 will feature professional voice talent to bring the twisted tale to life, and a double-heavy drum-centric jungle techno soundtrack by the fine composers of the original. I saw one boss and it was freakin unbelievable. Sadly, the game could not be grabbed the GF way so the shots do it little justice, but the dragon on this page attacks with a level of fury and surprise that cannot be explained. Bottom line, whether or not you dug the original (though I m sure most did), Pandemonium 2 will amaze you. It s everything a good sequel should be, and then some. ***ES***



Team Pandemonium



Thanks to everyone at Crystal for making our visit as entertaining as it was informative.








CROC

LEGEND OF THE GOBBOS

3D GAMING'S NEWEST CRITTER MAKES HIS PS DEBUT THIS FALL. THIS ONE'S GONNA BE GREAT!

Riding the tidal wave of 3D adventure/platform popularity, created by mega hits like Mario 64 and Tomb Raider, Croc, Fox's new character-driven 3D jewel, is among the best of a new crop headed our way... a resurgence is at hand.

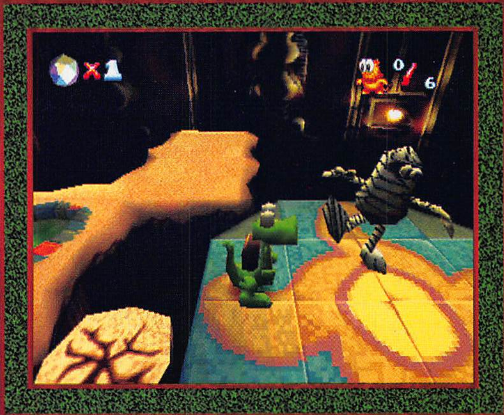
The moment you lay eyes on this visual feast of a platformer you'll know, no matter what it plays like, you're gonna make it a point to see every square inch of it. It's just that striking.

Fortunately, Argonaut has focused as much on gameplay as they have graphics. They've packed Croc with cavernous arenas, towering bosses, clever level design, and enough platform action to appease even the most demanding addict, and it's all surrounded by some of the most lush visuals ever seen in a free-form adventure.

Transparencies, translucencies, real time lighting, crisp texture mapping, gouraud shading, and peripheral vision that stretches far and wide all come together, creating an aura of vastness seldom seen in the realm of 3D gaming.

A cute little reptile with personality to burn and a Japanese persona, Croc attacks in two ways, with the patented head thomp, and by performing his "tail kick"







PREVIEW

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - ARGONAUT
- PUBLISHER - FOX
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - INT. TO ADV.
- AVAILABLE - 3RD QTR.



E. STORM
See what happens when they don't send art!



Travel through 4 islands... Desert, Ice, Forest, and the Castle Island of Baron Dante!












Waddle, jump, swim, swing, climb and smash the opposition with Croc's tail kick!



ala Gex. Each is accompanied by Croc's animated personality, Ka-pow!, Ka-smash! he squeals (in Urkel-ese) as he pulverizes Baron Dante's evil underlings.

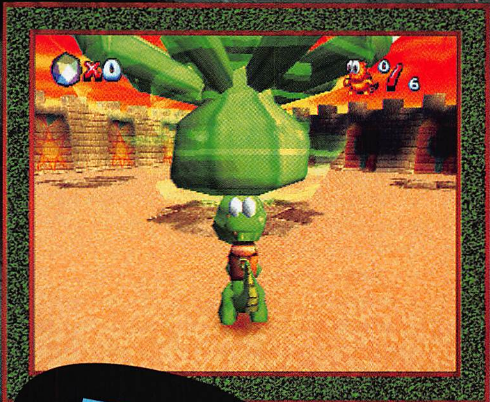
Like Sonic, Croc spends most of his time freeing captive critters and collecting crystals which, if he's hit, scatter. Collect 50 crystals and earn a bonus. Finish every level with every crystal and get an even bigger bonus. There are over 40 levels in all with a whopping 200 individual game arenas. Hard to fathom, given the amazing visuals in each.

Having played a 75% completed version of







Croc (for an hour or so until they wrestled it away), I can tell you first hand that this is a 3D platformer to be reckoned with. While it does borrow from the best in the category, it's got a look and feel all its own, not to mention some of the most creative level design I've seen in some time.

How much Croc resembles a Japanese-bred platformer must be commended as well. If I hadn't been briefed, I'd have sworn I was playing an import. The music is a distinctly Japanese sounding mix and Croc himself is bursting with Japanese overtones.

Argonaut is crafting what is sure to become an international success and one of this year's most memorable platform experiences. A further testament to the PS's polygon processing power (when it's in capable hands) is at hand.



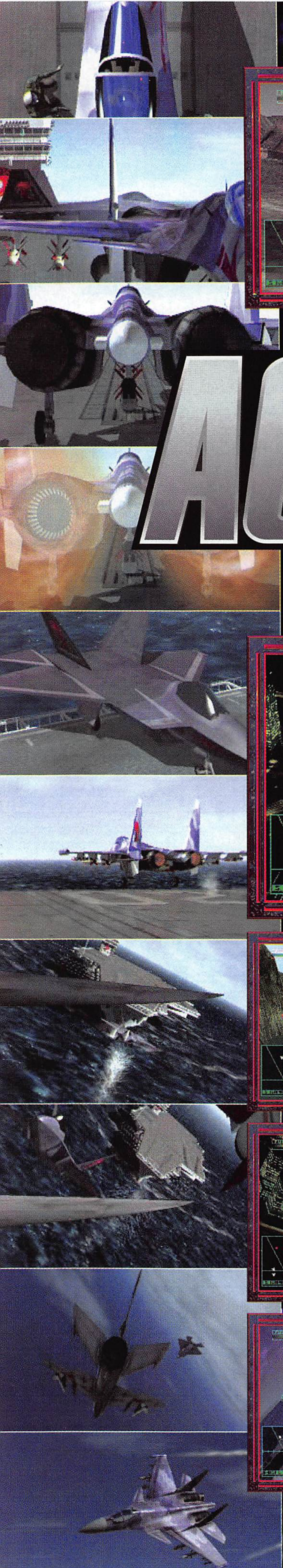


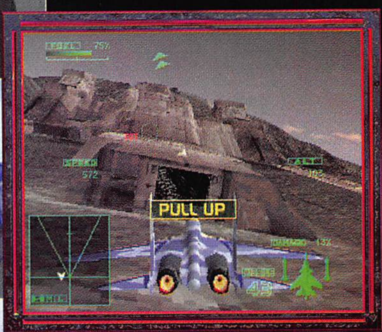

Rescue the peace loving Gobbo Islanders from the evil clutches of Baron Dante!



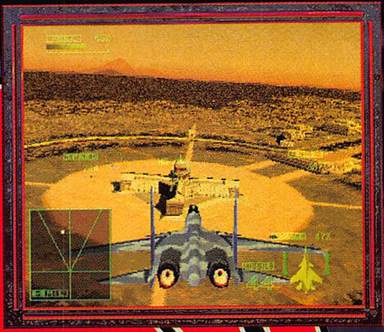










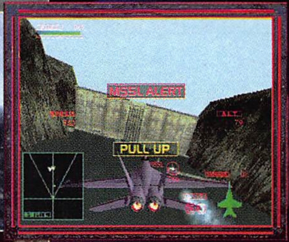
NAMCO PRESENTS YET ANOTHER HARDCORE PRODUCTION...

ACE COMBAT 2™

FULL-ON FLIGHT SIMULATION...

TAKE TO THE SKIES IN OVER TWENTY BURNING TOP GUN ASSIGNMENTS!







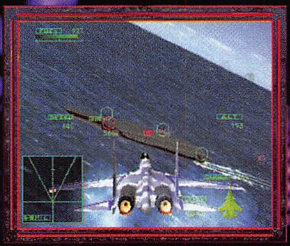
Anyone remembering back to the second wave of classic PlayStation software should look back on *Ace Combat* with fond affection. 'Twas the time when the world was still salivating on the likes of *Ridge Racer* and *Tekken*, and then Namco delivered a cool arcade flight sim. Sure, there was some major pop-up going on, a plum-throated Brit narrator obviously trained by the SNK school of announcers and a frightful two-player mode, but *Ace Combat* sure played a mean one-player dogfight. And now, over two years later, comes the much anticipated sequel, headed for American shores this August. Chief Hambleton launches into a Highway to the Danger Zone and tries wipe a bogey from his six. Let's see if he was successful...

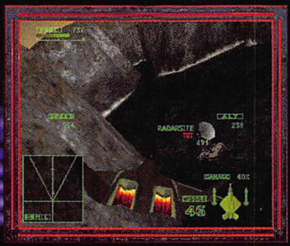
The entire *Ace Combat 2* experience simply oozes quality. From our complete Japanese version of the game, I experienced a frighteningly realistic rendered intro (of exceptional quality like the original) before my green wire-frame *Ace Combat 2* logo slammed into view. Time to try my options first, where I find everything from screen size adjustments to control options. Flicking my joypad to the expert setting (exactly the size button configuration as the first but with L2 and R2 for left and right yaw), I began my initial training assignment.

Instead of a fruity and stilted announcer bugging the hell out of me (as in the first *Ace Combat*), I was treated to a real-time pan around of the rebel base center of operations while a gruff no-nonsense commander rattled off my mission objectives. "Roger that!" The grizzled tough-talker explained the situation as military 'mood' music drummed away in the background, and I watched the stunning wire-frame of the mission area rotating about fluidly in front of me. Every piece of mission data was immediately available at my fingertips. Flicking my helmet visor down, I headed for the hangar. Clambering into my trusty F4, I cleared the hanger bay (where fully rotating real-time planes can be viewed) and took to the skies.

And that's where I've been ever since. This classic arcade dogfighting flight simulation has me hooked in exactly the same way as the first. However, there's a whole bundle of improvements you can look forward to this time around. There's the crackling comments coming in from your co-pilots and wingmen, smooth and constant 30 fps action, amazing in-flight movement and double the number of missions to fly (apparently over 30!). The very fact that the action doesn't ever (and I mean EVER) slow down is obviously due to the supreme 3D graphics engine Namco

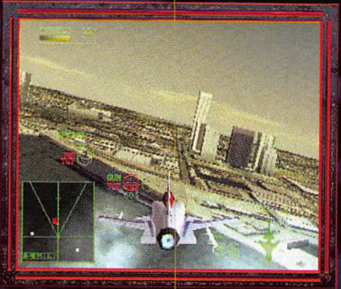


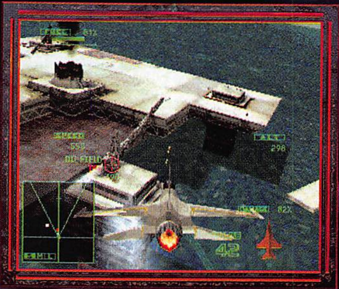














developers have honed over the intervening years. This has now reached almost perfection with a re-draw rate rivaling that of *Pilotwings 64* (however, some hills still look very polygonal and there's some pixelly ground textures). You simply don't need to see further than the re-draw rate, and those grumbling about the ground textures moving slower than they're supposed to when you're skimming the turf are in for a shock; everything moves at a rocketing and utterly believable speed!

increased cash (enabling the purchase of more expensive and even cooler planes). Some of these enemy targets are actual flying aces with suitably unfortunate names ("Maverick!", "Goose!", "Ace Gunner!", "Pantaloon King!", "Ernest!"... that sort of caper); bag one and you'll receive a special medal (and sometimes a new plane!). Kill all these flying aces to complete your trophy collection and... well, you'll have to wait and see, won't you? What we can tell you is the grading system (you'll be promoted after every sortie) gives you numerous cool-looking badges and new-found respect among your flying buddies. But, complete some levels in record time or by killing every single target out there, and you'll be granted a super secret mission... As you can tell, there's a whole load more flying action on offer this time around.

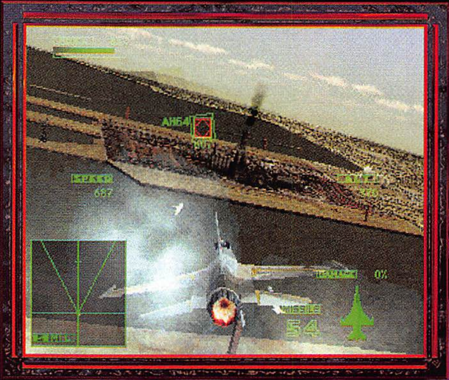


USE SKILLS TO WIN THE WAR!

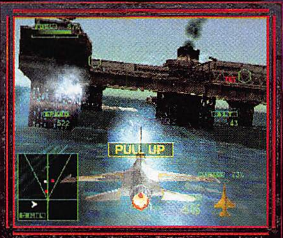
EXPERT AERIAL COMBAT TACTICS MUST BE EMPLOYED TO PREVENT A REBEL VICTORY!

This graphics engine was what instantly impressed the GameFan posse (look at the screenshots for evidence of the depth of vision, huge skyscrapers on many stages, the ability to fly up through the cloud line to dogfight at insane heights and planes hurtling out of control when they're hit!), but *Ace Combat 2* looks to be a lot more complete experience than that. Sure, there's no two-player option this time around (perhaps a wise move after the tragic 'dogfight in a texture-mapped square' of the first game), but the one player challenge more than makes up for that. Now the sorties you'll be launching are a lot more interesting and complex, involving the finest wingmen (codenamed 'Slash' or 'Edge'—obviously *AC2* developers are rock guitarist fans) who actually take care of business and have more available commands and are therefore of greater use. Also, there's increased artificial intelligence for the enemy pilots. Of course, some of the enemy AWACs and B2 planes are sitting ducks (circle behind these fools and pound away with machine gun fire), but try overstretching your piloting skills and you'll soon be facing whole squadrons of MiGs or F-22s flying insanely acrobatic loops and weaving maneuvers with one target in mind... your sorry rear!

Also present on all of the levels are many optional targets for destruction; these give you



So, you've got convincing environments, planes with rudders that actually move when you're turning, an abundance of 'airborne combat' tunes [ranging from the ultra cheese-ridden Kenny Loggins rock tragedies to some pretty cool Drum and Bass (er, and even Latino guitar) experiences], simply tons of missions and secrets, some ultra-secret 'military' aircraft to investigate (time to get Fox Mulder on the phone!) and a compatibility with analog and flight-stick joypads. Just what, exactly, could go wrong? This looks to be the most insane dogfighting experience you'll ever play! Find out if I'm dead-on (or completely off target) in the next issue! *CH*





PREVIEW

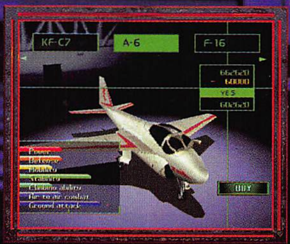
PlayStation

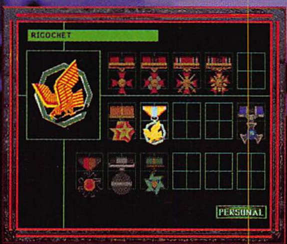
- DEVELOPER - NAMCO
- PUBLISHER - NAMCO
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - ONE
- DIFFICULTY - CHALLENGING
- AVAILABLE - AUGUST



CHIEF HAMBLETON
AC2 style... in effect!! Namco's airborne antics ROCK!!

SUPERB PRESENTATION THROUGHOUT!











YET ANOTHER STYLISH ARCADE CONVERSION FROM NAMCO!

INCREDIBLE NEW FEATURES AND STORY MODE! A WHOLE NEW DEADLY MISSION!

The President's daughter has been kidnapped by an infamous criminal mastermind called Serudo Garo and his army of devoted (read psychotic) henchmen, headed up by the scheming Wild Dog. The ransom for her safe return is the right to the throne of a small third world country, and should the government refuse to comply within 24 hours, Garo will send Rachel back to the President.... (dramatic pause) piece by piece! Gasp! You play the part of Richard Miller, a special agent assigned to rescue Rachel from Garo's evil clutches, and put a stop to his dastardly plans before anarchy ensues. Use of deadly force *has* been authorized.

TIME CRISIS

Although at first glance *Time Crisis* appears to be yet another *Virtua Cop* rip off, dig a bit deeper and you'll soon discover that nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, *Time Crisis* is a polygonal, on-rails 'gun' game, but Namco has added enough unique features to distance their effort from AM2's homicidal classic.









EXCITING SCENES FROM ARCADE MODE...







Probably the most innovative feature of *Time Crisis* is the ability to duck behind cover. In the arcade this is achieved with a special pedal, but in the PS version you have the option to use either a button on the side of the Guncon, or (and Namco doesn't recommend this) plug a d-pad into the second port and step on it! Ducking serves to both reload your gun (a non-upgradable six-shot special) and protect you from enemy fire. A strict time limit ensures that you can't just duck forever (hence *'Time' Crisis*), and you must also duck to avoid environmental hazards such as swinging hooks and rolling crates. Ducking adds a much needed element of strategy to the usual blast-



RICHARD MILLER
SPECIAL AGENT





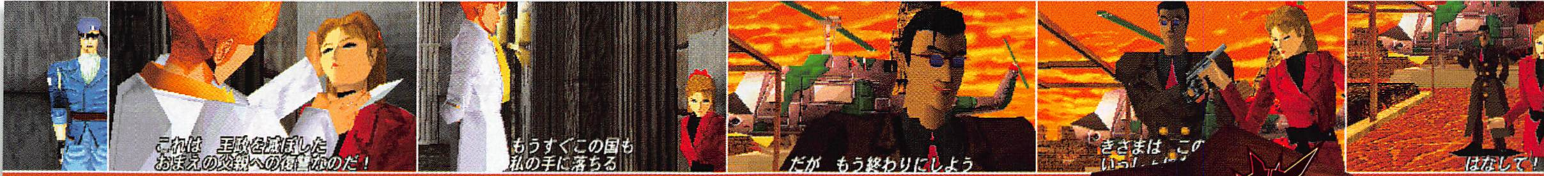






















ing formula, and really gives *Time Crisis* a different flavor than *VCop*.

The second major innovation of *Time Crisis* is the importance of time. Although you do take damage in *Time Crisis* and can be shot to death (indeed when you first play through the game that's your main concern) as you get better time becomes the primary consideration. Time is more important than accuracy, and getting the best possible score involves finding the quickest possible way to clear an area.

The PS conversion is shaping up just fine, with Sony's 3D powerhouse doing a decent job of replicating the System 22's amazing visuals. The version I played was pretty much complete (only the translation was left) and looked great. But best of all, in keeping with Namco's tradition of beefing up their coin-op conversions, they've included an all new 'Original' story mode exclusive to the PS version. It's not just an extra level, it's a whole new mission with five different levels, multiple routes and multiple endings! We'll be back next month with a full review and more info. Stay tuned... **K**



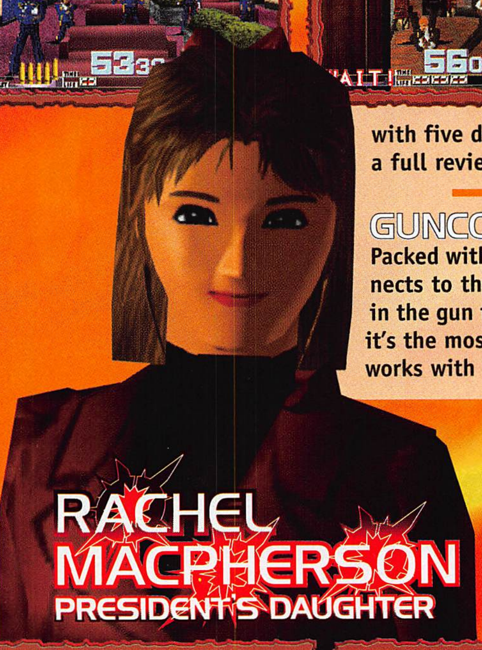




GUNCON—THE NEW NAMCO PERIPHERAL!

Packed with *Time Crisis* is Namco's very own light gun, the Guncon. The Guncon connects to the video output of your PlayStation and actually stores the screen image in the gun for accuracy up to one pixel!! It may not recoil like the arcade gun, but it's the most accurate home light gun ever made. Unfortunately, the Guncon only works with Namco compatible games, the next one being *Point Blank*.

対応 Guncon

















P PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAMCO	# OF PLAYERS - 1 PLAYER
PUBLISHER - NAMCO	DIFFICULTY - TRICKY
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - AUGUST



KNIGHTMARE
Guncon: Even without recoil, it's still a kick! DUCK!

R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CORE
PUBLISHER - EIDOS
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - ONE
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - HOPEFULLY NOW



E. STORM
Adventurous little devils, aren't they?!

SwagMan





After over two years in development, Core's first ever top-down action adventure is upon us. Designed in the vein of Nintendo's mega-huge Zelda franchise, Swagman not only covers familiar territory, but does so in impressive fashion with added play elements and an emphasis on art and character design.

As the CG intro unfurls, all Swag breaks loose as somehow the pages of the creepy book Zack and Hanna are reading before bed suddenly cause strange occurrences. They somehow open the door to an alternate reality (the one that invades your sleep) and Swagman is the resident evil force. Dreamflight, a band of shapely fairies attempt to warn Zack and Hanna but are quickly captured by the Swagster and locked away in Limbo. Hanna is locked away as well, caged by Swagman's evil invaders (a horde of Gremlin-like demons—playful, but deadly). Zack takes cover behind a stuffed bear and avoids the attack. Now, alone at first, Zack must negotiate the now possessed household and free the Dreamflights one by one, and ultimately face Swagman himself. In order to gain access to the imprisoned Dreamflight, Zack must collect bugs that are strewn throughout the game as directed by the Scarab, the king of Zack's bug collection (broken open by a





LIMBO RESCUE THE CAPTIVE DREAMFLIGHT!











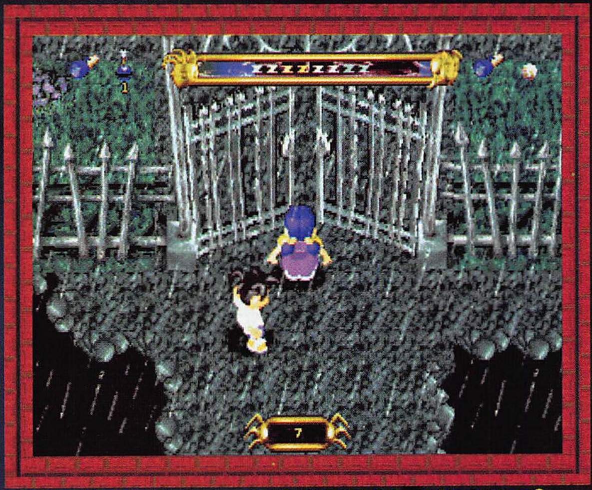





clumsy henchman). Collected bugs are unleashed to form a path to each of the Swagman's prisoners.

After unlocking the first two tutorial puzzles, Zack is joined by Hanna, and cooperative gameplay ensues. This is when Swagman begins to take shape. The first hour or so is spent swatting demons with Zack's flashlight, bombing your way into hidden areas and getting accustomed to the games many nuances (chests, weapon usage etc.). Once Hanna is freed however (after defeating Master Pumpskin) one of the other siblings activates switches (and the like) while the suitable player takes care of business. For instance, Zack cannot reach Gloom once he's set in the middle of his lair, while Hanna's Yo-Yo can. So while Zack holds open the way to the warp, Hanna goes in for the kill. In the nightmare worlds where

SWAGGY CUT YOU TO RIBBONS I WILL!



THE BONEYARD... NO PLACE FOR CHILDREN!





double jumping must be performed Hanna once again must be called upon. While Zack's dream monster has stronger attacks, Hanna's has better jumping capabilities. And so it goes as you traverse dank dungeons, gardens, bone yards, and other such creepy locales. Each level is quite large (many areas linked together), and once the boss is reached in each, you won't be disappointed. Linked to the game's mainframe, joined by mirrors, are nightmare areas which Zack and Hanna must use to access parallel worlds. Here the duo takes the form of hideous creatures of their own design. Zack emits a breath of fire in this darkest of modes and has a wicked head-butt, while Hanna dons laser vision and double jumping. Weaving through these action-oriented levels adds further to the game's overall appeal.

Swagman's rendered graphics (sprinkled with polygonal objects) are rich in design and detail as are the effects such as light sourcing, transparencies and just about everything else in the PS's war chest. The music too, is first rate and fits the drudgery of the situation perfectly. Haunting melodies accompanied by somber choruses make up much of the soundtrack.

It all adds up to yet another game in which a classic genre has received a suitable 32-bit overhaul. While breakthrough 3D adventures will always be a welcome commodity, so will the old school games dressed up in shiny new guise. If you agree, I highly recommend Core's latest. ***-ES***



Mommy said monsters aren't real...Well kiddies, looks like mommy lied!








ONE Man. ONE solution. ONE state of mind.
John Cain is the ULTIMATE soldier of the future!

one

ASC has done a few good games in the past, but nothing that really distinguishes them as a major league player. Let's face it: Capcom and Namco are hardly quaking in their boots. Which is what makes *One* all the more shocking. Developed by Visual Concepts, *One* is a 3D action/adventure (emphasis on action) that has the potential to become something truly special. Admittedly, the game is currently at a very early stage of development (the beta we played was only 15% complete), but the framework is in place for an epic action experience the likes of which has never been seen before.





One is set 40 years in the future, with the player taking control of John Cain, an ordinary man transformed into a lethal killing machine by a top secret bio-genetics experiment. Cain has had his left arm replaced with a state of the art multi-purpose assault weapon, and now thrives on one emotion—rage. The story hasn't been finalized, but apparently Cain escapes the experiment and returns to his apartment, which is where the game starts. The parties responsible for the experiment want Cain back, and they send a force to his apartment to get him. Cain escapes to the rooftop and the action begins...

The first time I saw *One* in motion it reminded me of *Pandemonium*. The 3D graphics, the large environments, the set paths, the sweeping camera movements all bear more than a passing resemblance to Crystal Dynamics' 2.5D classic. But the moment you start to play the game you realize the differences.

First, *One* features true 3D control. This changes





PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - VISUAL CONCEPTS	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - ASC GAMES	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER

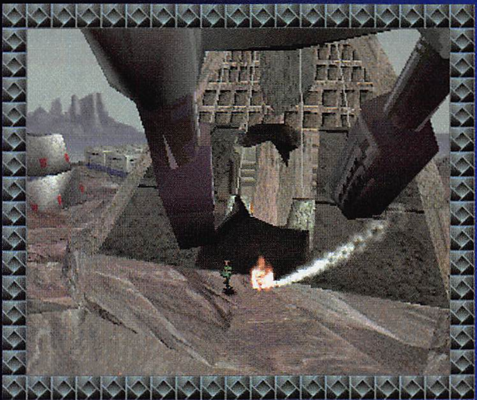


KNIGHTMARE
This One's gonna be big!





WHO'S THE BOSS?





From what we've seen so far, One's boss encounters are going to be some of the most spectacular ever! In the mountain stage you must lure an attack helicopter into blowing open the side of a heavily armored pyramid by placing yourself in the line of fire; in the monorail stage a giant mechanized beast chases the train you are riding on top of, and in the metropolis stage a vast attack ship shoots at you *through* a building, sending glass and concrete flying! Trust me, it looks awesome.

the gameplay dramatically, and allows for a much stronger emphasis on both shooting and exploration. The levels can (and do) branch in all directions, while the freedom of movement gives the combat an almost overhead shooter feel. Cain must use a variety of weapon power-ups (plasma cannons, missile launchers, flame throwers, etc.) to battle enemy forces, while at the same time negotiating tricky platform sections. The control is pretty tight, and Cain can run, roll, strafe, hang and climb with ease.







Second, the levels in *One* are HUGE with NO LOADING! All the data is streamed on the fly, *Crash Bandicoot* style, resulting in hours of seamless gameplay. Currently there are five stages under development, including a mountain stage with crumbling walkways and high tension wires, an underground monorail stage complete with an extensive train ride, and a metropolis stage which takes place on rooftops high above the city streets. The camera flows through *Pandemonium*-style set positions to add cinematic appeal to the action, although ASC is planning on making the camera controllable in the final version.

Even at this early stage of development, *One* is looking hot. There's still a lot to do before the game's fall release, but if Visual Concepts can make good on everything they've promised, ASC should have a world class hit on their hands. Keep it here. ***K***







CHOOSE THE CORE THEN EQUIP THE PARTS TO MAKE YOUR MECHANIZED WARRIOR! FIGHT THE CROME ORGANIZATION! TAKE YOUR ARMORED CORE TO WAR!

ARMORED CORE





Core News Network
GameFan reporters shot this exclusive footage from the resistance front line. Mad Core Colonel Mad Jack McMad allowed our cameras to follow him into battle.

MAD, MANIC MECH ACTION! ARMORED CORE IS HARDCORE!







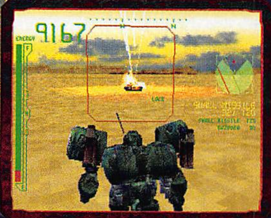
A half a century ago, a war broke out in which humans lost all of their land. In this time of upheaval, the ancient bureaucracy of the world's governments crumbled as their administrative abilities failed one by one. With the prospect of losing their land staring them in the face, global conglomerates organized a federation of corporations, and in a last-ditch effort, planned to construct an underground city.

The construction of the newly-christened Isaac City (does Ted Lange live there?) was proceeding smoothly when all of a sudden, the just formed federation was dissolved under the fair competition policy. Crome, the dominant corporation of the construction, was now in the position of managing this urban project. They began flexing their significant corporate muscle and seized control of the operation. Other corporations began to criticize and despise Crome. In earnest, rival companies began equipping an army and started fighting for rights within Isaac City. In **Armored Core**, you play as a member of Raven's Nest, a secret police force set up to carry out illegal, though sometimes legal, missions in defense of Crome's interests.

As the game begins, you are required to complete a basic mission to earn some starting credits. Using these funds,







STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO CORE ASSEMBLY









BUY AND SELL PARTS FOR YOUR CORE

1 This is where it all starts. Build your Armored Core from scratch with a measly 100,000 credits. At this stage stick to the basic parts with a cheap and light machine gun. You won't be able to start a mission until you have a complete Core which meets the energy and weight requirements.

CHECK ENERGY AND WEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

2 With the parts in tow, you need to enter the garage to assemble them. Equip each component and keep an eye on the numbers in the bottom right corner. These show the weight and energy limitations of your Armored Core. Choose carefully so that arms, legs and weapons don't go over the limit.







Core News Network
After a hard day's work, Colonel Mad Jack McMad likes to relax with a bout of competitive Core frolicking with his comrades. Photos courtesy of Link Cable Productions.

you build your own mech from scratch. From here, you are allowed to tackle missions in the hopes of earning enough credits to build a mech that is powerful enough to survive the more difficult levels. Consistent upgrading of your mech is absolutely necessary for the success of Raven's Nest. And when the number of missions (either successfully completed or not) reaches a certain point, the final mission becomes playable.

The number of ways that your mech can be configured (supposedly over one million) truly adds a level of creativity to Armored Core's gameplay. From replacing bipedal legs with tank-like treads to substituting arms with missile launchers, the mech's appearance can vary wildly—they aren't all humanoid in form. Going one step further, the color of the mech's individual components can be colored with RGB precision. You can also select from a number of overall camo patterns and colorings. Finally, there's an emblem editor which allows you to design your own small insignia which then appears on your creation.

Armored Core allows the player to save his or her mech at any time to a memory card, thus rendering the unique machine completely portable. You'll be able to take your personalized (and presumably powerful) mech over to a crony's abode and blow their non-com machine to smithereens. Imagine playing a slightly slower, more intricate version of **Virtual On** set in huge arenas. The two player split screen is matted with two roughly square windows preserving the 4:3 aspect ratio of a television. This makes the individual windows rather small but properly proportioned and with a very playable frame rate. However, for the true battle experience, two PS's can be linked up for full screen, two monitor play. Unfortunately, there aren't that many of us out there with the resources to experience this perfect form of two player play, but it's a welcome feature.

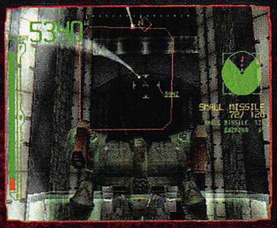
There's still a fair amount of work to be done on **Armored Core** before it's complete. A number of missions have yet to be finalized, but it's more than likely that the two player battle mode and the customizable mechs will be the biggest draw of this game. With its solid graphics and already polished feel, it has attracted the attention of Sony of America who plan to release it stateside. I'd say that's a pretty safe bet. AC should provide all the mech thrills any sane human could handle.







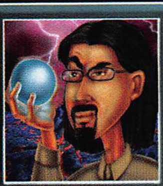




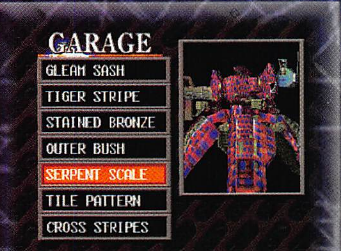


P PREVIEW — PlayStation

DEVELOPER - FROM SOFTWARE	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - SONY	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER '97



SUBSTANCE D
Armored Core in development is hard core.









SELECT A COLOR SCHEME TO MATCH THE TERRAIN

3 Once assembled, the Core can receive a custom paint job. Choose from a variety of styles which can be further edited to suit your own personal taste or more ideally, to match the terrain of your next mission. Forest, jungle, arctic and night patterns are just a few on offer.

CUSTOM EDIT COLORS AND DESIGN AN EMBLEM

4 When you have decided on the color, complete your masterpiece with a cool-looking emblem that fits snugly onto your mech's shoulder. Choose from the sample library or design your own with a smart color palette complete with brush styles, shape fills and other painting tools.

PLAYSTATION NATION UPDATE: NEW CRASH 2 SCREENS!









IN DEVELOPMENT

PlayStation

CRASH BANDICOOT 2











Coverage has sprang to life rather early regarding the sequel to my favorite platformer of '96, *Crash Bandicoot*. As I'm writing this I've not played or even seen *Crash 2* in motion (it isn't due out for another 5 months or so) but the kind folks at Sony were nice enough to throw me a bone or two.

Among Crash's new bag of tricks are a rocket, which he motors down huge twisting corridors, and the ability to traverse over head grates.

As for the levels, they are apparently wider and more cavernous then the previous ones, and now feature multiple paths. The most interesting new feature to come to light thus far though, has got to be the serpentine effect in which Crash goes from 2D to 3D within the same level, as exhibited in the rainy shot above. The mixing of play mechanics in these levels will be refreshing to say the least. Visually, well, for the second year in a row, you'll be hard pressed to find anything which exhibits this much visual prowess.

As pure platformers go I still consider the original a flawless game (by '96 standards of course) and I expect *Crash 2* to leave a similar impression. The competition will be much more prevalent this year however, so the design team's got their work cut out for them. We're told 8 levels will be playable at the by-now-past E3 so look for more comprehensive coverage in the August E3 spectacular. ***ES***





THE LOST WORLD
JURASSIC PARK™

DreamWorks Interactive







In light of seeing the movie, I can now report that *The Lost World* game actually follows the story of *The Lost World* movie (what little there was) pretty closely. The action takes place on the island where InGen originally created the dinosaurs before shipping them to Jurassic Park, and revolves around InGen's attempt to take dinosaurs off the island—'The worst idea in the history of bad ideas,' as Jeff Goldblum puts it. Obviously the game takes a few creative liberties (you get to see the story from the dinosaurs' point of view), but for the most part you'll be surprised at how accurate it is, right down to the final chapter's taking place in San Diego.

The movies are famous for their award winning CG, and DreamWorks have done an equally impressive job of bringing the dinosaurs to life on the PS. Their technique of wrapping textures around complete polygon models (as opposed to applying separate textures to each polygon) gives the creature's skin a hyper realistic look, especially when they move—their skin actually stretches! The models of the dinosaurs themselves are also excellent, and animate so well (at a constant 30fps) that from a distance they look like 2D sprites.



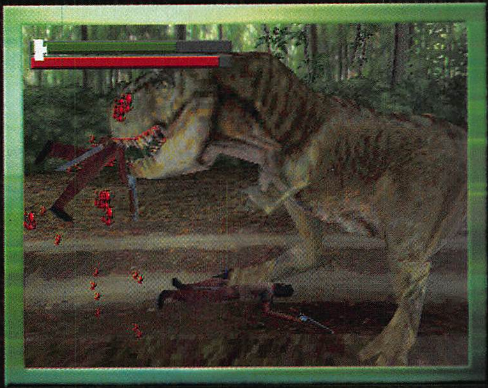


This beta is one of many we've received from DreamWorks, and shows the game in a near finished state. Nearly all the levels are functioning, more enemies have been added and the FMV is in place (not taken from the movie, unfortunately). Like the original *Jurassic Park* on Genesis you get to control different creatures as the game progresses (Compy, Raptor, Hunter, Sarah Harding and the almighty T-Rex) and each has its own specific abilities. We'll review *Lost World* next month. K









PREVIEW — PlayStation

DEVELOPER - DREAMWORKS	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - EA/DREAMWORKS	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - AUGUST '97



KNIGHTMARE
"Oh, sure, that's how it starts. Then there's running, and screaming..."



FORSAKEN

BLAST THE FREE-LOADING SCUM!!!!

Given the success of *Descent* (and it's superior sequel, *Descent 2*) it's surprising that we haven't seen more *Descent* clones in the past few years, especially in the console market. PS *Descent* was but a shadow of its former PC self, and *Descent Maximum* wasn't much better. The fact is, the market is ripe for a decent 360-degree corridor shooter right now, and Acclaim may have just the answer...







After an uncontrollable fusion reaction devastates the planet surface, Earth becomes a lifeless husk, devoid of atmosphere and bathed in searing radiation from the sun. The dead system is classified as condemned, meaning that every free-loading scum in the galaxy has the right to raid the planet and take anything of value. In *Forsaken* you play the part of one of these scavengers, a ruthless mercenary who pilots an anti-grav pioncycle into the now-abandoned Earth settlements in search of fame and fortune. Mostly fortune.

Acclaim informed me that the *Forsaken* beta they were touring with was extremely early, but they could have fooled me! Already the game runs at a near-constant 60 fps (yes, 60 fps!) with detailed polygon environments and some truly breathtaking lighting effects. Although there were only a few enemies present, most of the weapons were working (spectacularly), and Probe claims that they can keep this level of speed and fluidity even once all the enemies and AI are in place.

At present, the control is set up nearly identically to *Descent* (definitely the best format for this type of game) but—thank the lord—the option to totally remap all the controls is already in! In fact, if anything, the anti-grav cycles are even more maneuverable than the craft in *Descent*, boding very well for some fast-paced 360-degree combat in the final version.

Probe plans to include at least 15 different single player levels in *Forsaken*, split over five different zones. There will be 15 different cyber-bikes to ride and 15 characters to choose from, each with their own voice and personality. But perhaps best of all, *Forsaken* will include a split-screen (vertical or horizontal) two player mode, with eight custom designed multi-player levels. *Forsaken* has the words 'potential' and 'hit' stamped all over it. I'll drop some more knowledge the moment I get it. K









P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PROBE

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

\# OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - FEB '98



KNIGHTMARE
Descent at 60fps?






CAPCOM'S D&D COLLECTION





Fans of the awesome Capcom coin-ops (and we know you're out there!) should be drooling! The first game in the Saturn *D&D Collection*, *Tower of Doom*, is coming along beautifully–obviously at home on the 2D king. Both *Tower of Doom* (seen here) and its sequel *Shadow Over Mystaria* will be on the *D&D Collection* disc, scheduled to appear on the Saturn this fall. *Shadow Over Mystaria* has been extremely camera shy, but we have plenty of *Tower of Doom* to show in this exclusive E3 preview.

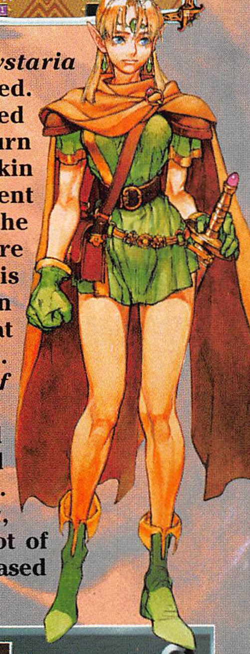
How accurate is *Tower of Doom* translating to the Saturn? Well, as *Alpha 2* and *Cyberbots* proved, the Saturn just eats up CPS 2 conversions. Whether it's the Saturn's inherent abilities, its additional RAM, or the cartridge RAM upgrade, 2D titles just beg to be on the Saturn. All

Dungeons & Dragons

TOWER OF DOOM




the CPS 2 translations thus far have been fighting games, however, while *TOD* is a side-scrolling hack-'n-slash beat-'em-up, a new Capcom treat for Saturn owners. We now have many characters filling the screen, large scrolling environments, and classic Capcom sprite madness. Thankfully the Saturn seems to handle such tasks effortlessly, as the graphic quality of *Towers of Doom* almost perfectly replicates its arcade counterpart, with no slow down and very few missing frames.

The only reason *D&D* is a "preview" at this point is because *Shadows Of Mystaria* isn't ready. Otherwise, *Tower of Doom* seems to be almost 100% completed. Remember the Troll that must be burned to be destroyed? The multi-tentacled Hellhounds? Or how about the swamp outside of town, where the Cleric uses Turn Undead to destroy swarms of zombies, and a giant Black Dragon boils your skin with hot acid? It's all here, down to the pixel. And while the loading is frequent (at least once per area), it's acceptably short. The music is PCM, straight from the arcade (no remixed arrange tuneage, thankfully) and the sound effects are arcade true (although still Japanese at this point). Rounding out the accurate conversion blitz is perfect control, made joyous by that lovely Saturn pad, and a hot two-player mode. Basically, let it be known that *D&D Towers of Doom* is perfectly intact on the Saturn.



I'll voluntarily jump the gun and form a solid opinion on this one: *D&D Towers of Doom* will be a perfect, awesome conversion on the Saturn. I can't say the same for *Shadow Over Mystaria*, because I haven't played it, but *TOD* puts a lot of faith in my heart. Fans should be very, very pleased with Capcom's *D&D Collection*. **G**

P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - FALL '97



GLITCH
Yeah, yeah... I played D&D in high school... So?








GRAND TOUR RACING ninety eight

When all is said and done, will the PlayStation be remembered as a racer's system? Who knows, but there's a fair number of racing games on the PS (a lot of them quite good) and the struggle for a gamer's coveted attention (and dough) is survival of the fittest. Actually, maybe that's not true now that I think of it. Look at the success of **Need For Speed II**. Alright, so I've just discredited my own point. Regardless, a racing game needs to be pretty decent to succeed, at least critically, and Activision's **Grand Tour Racing '98** looks like it might be well on its way to being just that: pretty decent.

GTR'98 sends you on a globe trot as you race through exotic locales all around the world. Egypt, Easter Island, Moscow, Switzerland, Scotland, and Hong Kong serve as backdrops for your racing pleasure. Even better, each course has at least six alternate routes that can be selected at the start of each race. Not only does this alter the actual path you take around each track, but it can also change the weather conditions, time of day, or even the class of car that you drive. Let's just take the Hong Kong track for example. Select route 1 and you race a sports car through sunny conditions. Select route 4 and you race an Indy car through the sunset. Pretty cool, wouldn't you say?

GTR'98, even in its alpha state, is a fine looking racing game. The courses approach zero pop up meaning you can see really far. In exchange for the expansive view, the frame rate chugs along a bit making the game play a little slowly at this stage, but I'd bet a few dollars that it'll be sped up. Or it better be, let's put it that way. Because as it stands, the slower speed makes traversing the track (especially with a NeGcon) a little too easy. Fun, but somewhat easy. I'll trust them to rectify. Strangely enough, the two player split screen mode seems faster than one player. Hmmm.

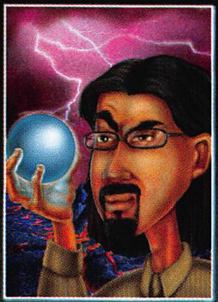
The alpha we received was devoid of any music and the sound effects have yet to be finalized. As is, the cars sound like buzzy gnats. I trust some meaty samples will be in place by the tme the game ships. And as I understand it, techno will probably be the block rockin' beat of choice, and I'd say that's a pretty safe bet. Nothing like driving to some pumping tunes, eh?

With a planned September release, **GTR'98** is now in the tricky process of final tweaking, where, as in the editing of a film, a perfect synergy must form between all the disparate pieces. I think they'll be able to pull it off. Please look for a final review in the near future. SD

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EUTECHNYX
PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - N/A
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



SUBSTANCE D
Yet another PS racing game...





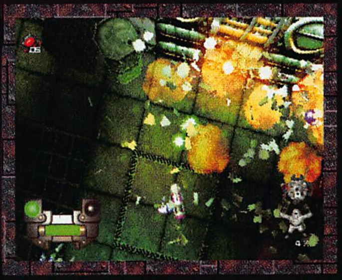







HOT LAST MINUTE ADDITION: 2 PLAYER SPLIT-SCREEN ACTION, NO SLOW DOWN, 24 FPS!

-MACHINE- HUNTER

I've been consistently impressed by Eurocom's progress with *Machine Hunter*, every new version we receive is a marked improvement over the previous. And now, with this last update before the final, *Machine Hunter* has been cured of all its ailments.

Remember my big complaint in past previews? Right, no two-player option. Well, I made it very clear to MGM that I'd be scoring *Machine Hunter* lower if it didn't offer a two-player mode. They said something like: "Uh, we didn't plan on it, and it's probably too late...but we'll try." Not too assuring. But like Parappa says, you gotta believe. And sure enough, in this latest rev, Eurocom squeezed in a fantastic two-player mode, split-screen no less, with zero sacrifices to the excellent 3D engine. Amazing. A simple commodity, and now *Machine Hunter* is a real contender. Other additions, or should I say refinements, include buttoned-up levels, finalized sound, a few more seconds of FMV, and additional enemies (check out the all-new tanks, cannons, and huge bosses in our shots!).






Machine Hunter is turning out to be a very cool game. The two-player mode is great (thumbs up to MGM for listening), and the 3D engine and techno tunes are top-quality. We will absolutely, positively review *Machine Hunter* next month, so check back with me before you whip out your wallet. ***G***

P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EUROCOM
PUBLISHER - MGM INTERACTIVE
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
AVAILABLE - AUGUST '97



GLITCH
Machine Hunter is "host" to many a "droid hunter"



MURDER



DEATH



KILL





They said it couldn't be done. A game that took advantage of hi-end PC technology be converted to the PS? Impossible! Only a madman (or madmen) would try. Enter NeverSoft, who in an incredibly short amount of time have not only got the game up and running on a PS, but running well. Obviously, they've had to make some compromises, particular with the graphics, but otherwise this is MDK on PS. And as anyone who's played MDK on PC will tell you, that's pretty exciting news.

As the game's producer - David Hoffman from PlayMates explains - NeverSoft are competent they can include all of the enemy animation, level architecture, and sub games (such as when Kurt turns into a snowboard) found in the PC version and still meet the intended 30 fps.

Sony owners can also look forward to a few PS exclusive features such as analog control using Sony's new pad (which actually shakes when Kurt gets hit), and a Redbook audio soundtrack from Tommy Tallarico. NeverSoft are currently toying with the idea of adding some extra lighting effects, though it depends on how much time they have.

Whatever their intentions, NeverSoft certainly have their work cut out for them if they want to meet their August deadline. There's still a long way to go, and as Hoffman points out, if the game doesn't meet with Dave Perry's personal satisfaction, he won't sign off on it! What more of a quality guarantee could you ask for?!.......... K





SNIPER MODE

When Kurt attaches his gun to his face he enters Sniper Mode. In this mode you can zoom in on enemies up to a mile away (game distance!) and put a bullet through their eye without ever being spotted. It's a technological feat, and although the PS version isn't quite as accurate as the PC, it's still mighty impressive. However, NeverSoft are having trouble implementing the three bullet cameras (which track your bullet as it travels) and they may have to be left out.

P PREVIEW

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - NEVERSOFT
- PUBLISHER - PIE
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



KNIGHTMARE
Head shot every time.





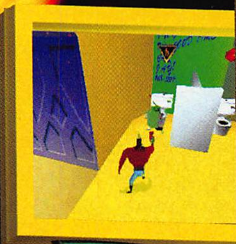




Alien Fiends Beware...







UPDATE

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SONY

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - CD

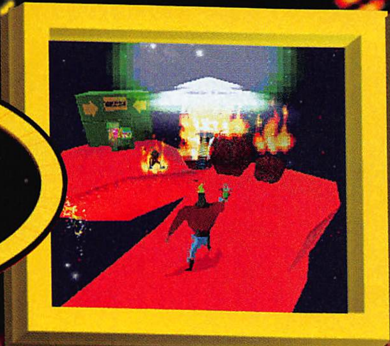
OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ?

AVAILABLE - FALL



E. STORM
It's all about Sony style. You gotta reckonize!







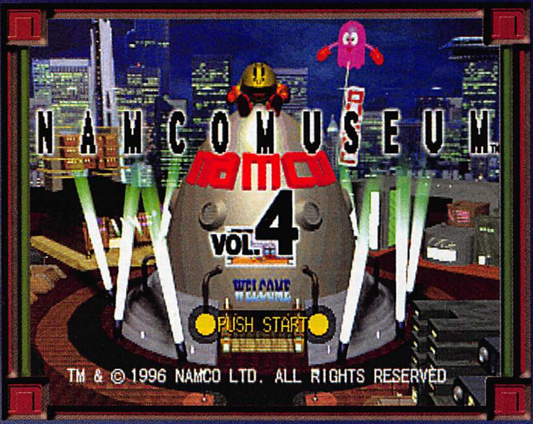


So, what have we learned about Blasto since we last met? Well, we know that it's a major title for Sony, that it sports a super hero with a massive upper body and Yosemite Sam's legs, and that software mip-mapping and z-buffering are being implemented in software, the result being clean textures up close and smooth polys as you pass, without any of that hideous warping we see so much. As far as the gameplay goes, judging by these early screens, Blasto is obviously a 3D adventure loaded with hot pyrotechnics, inspired lighting effects, lots of play mechanics (we know he flies, for one thing) and lots of shootin' stuff. Yeeha!

Textures are currently being added to further enhance the visuals, which I'm told look phenomenal in motion. It'll all be perfectly clear soon enough as Blasto will have been played by all in time for our post show report next month. *ES*

Blasto is coming!

NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME IV



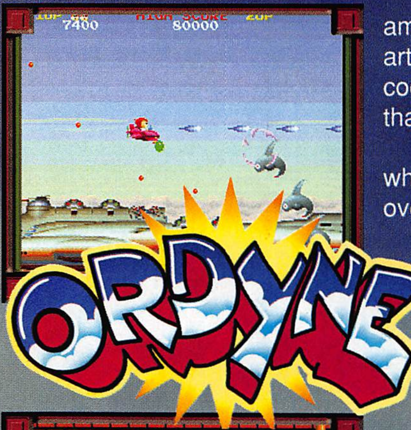


Look, it's another *Museum* from Namco. Featuring more classic titles, Volume 4's exhibits include *Assault*, *Pac-Land*, *Ordyne*, *The Genji and Heike Clans*, and *The Return of Ishtar*.

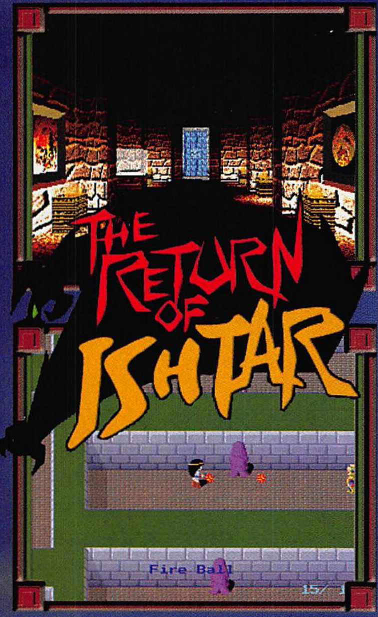
Like other Museum releases, Volume 4 has all the amenities you've come to expect. You've got your game art and the elaborate virtual museum itself (which is quite cool in Vol. 4). As for the games, it's your usual mix of titles that are fun to revisit and those that are simply just "there."

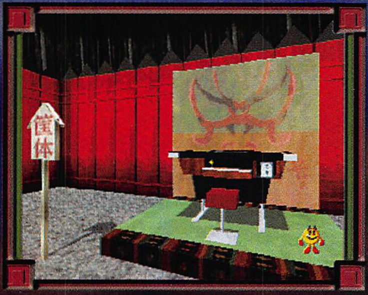
Here's a quick rundown on everything you'll receive when you pick up Volume 4. *Assault*, the neato rotating overhead tank game is, surprisingly enough, compatible with Sony's dual analog stick. Overkill? To be sure, but cool anyhoo. *Ordyne* is still a simple and cutesy side scrolling shooter. *Pac-Land*, with its strange control scheme, will probably only appeal to those with fond memories attached to playing the game when it was new (or have a *Pac-Man* fetish). *Genji*, which if I'm not mistaken also appeared on PC Engine, is a side scrolling/overhead actioner where the view sometimes switches to this weird close up that is bizarre looking and strange to play. Finally, *Ishtar* (sequel to *Tower of Druaga*), though not as bad as the Beatty/Hoffman megaflop of the eighties, is a rather mundane action RPG, that again, can probably only be appreciated for its sentimental value.

If you ask me, pretty much any game that's on a Museum collection is sort of beyond any manner of harsh criticism. Simply enjoy these classics for what they are and what they were. ***SD***















REVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAMCO	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - NAMCO	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - JULY



SUBSTANCE D How about another trip to the museum. You're cultured, right?









Poy Poy



KONAMI SURPRISES THE NATION!!
MULTI-PLAYER MAYHEM AT ITS BEST!!



Poy Poy (AKA Poiter's Point) is what I like to call a 'party' game: a novelty title that succeeds purely on the basis of its multiplayer mode. Obviously that means it's a game that can only be truly appreciated if you have the right set-up (i.e. a multi-tap, four pads and three friends who don't suck at games) but in the right conditions such titles can produce some of gaming's finest moments. Case in point: where would we be without the ultimate party game, Bomberman?



The principle behind Poy Poy is as simple as at it gets: Enter one of six different arenas with three other contestants and just throw stuff around. Preferably at each other. That's it. No punching, no guns, no combos–just throw stuff. You can throw rocks, logs, eggs, bombs, boxes–heck, you can even throw each other. Anything not attached to the ground is ammunition! Every time you get hit (or are thrown) you take damage, and the last person left standing is the winner. Game Over.



Ok, to be fair it's a *little* more complex than that–but not very. There are environmental hazards to be avoided (like whirlwinds and dinosaurs), dozens of special throws to choose from and different characters with varying physical attributes. But no matter how you dress it up you're still just chucking things around.



Thankfully, chucking things around in Poy Poy is a blast! The controls are instinctive and responsive, the gameplay is fast and competitive (ganging up on the leader is a must) and once you get the hang of things you realize that there is *some* strategy in there. Kind of. The graphics are smooth and clean, if a little simple, but they fit the tone of the game perfectly, as do the whimsical tunes and effects.

If you're in the position to enjoy four player multi-tap gaming on a regular basis, then I'd say Poy Poy is a must buy. It's up there with Bomberman and Death Tank at the top of the multiplayer gaming ladder. Just don't even consider it as a one player game. One final observation: It seems to me that Poy Poy would make an excellent N64 cartridge. How 'bout it Konami? *K*

FIND HIDDEN SURPRISES! SECRETS LURK IN THE CONTEST MODE!!







R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KONAMI	# OF PLAYERS - 1 TO 4
PUBLISHER - KONAMI	DIFFICULTY -EASY
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - JULY



KNIGHTMARE
The best party game since Bomberman!

THE LEGEND COMES HOME FOR THE LAST TIME...
FINALLY, THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO BE.

STREET FIGHTER II

• C • O • L • L • E • C • T • I • O • N •

There are three video games worthy enough to truly be called *legendary.* One created the side-scrolling action game. One created the console role-playing genre. The other created the fighting game. These three games are *Super Mario Bros.*, *Dragon Quest*, and *Street Fighter II*. *Super Mario Bros.* and *Dragon Quest* are console originals, and for all time will remain perfect, in their original state. *Street Fighter II* however, is an arcade game. Think about it; up until now, every version of *Street Fighter II* you've played at home has been flawed. There has been no feasible way to *truly* own *SFII*... until now. Utilizing the power of 32-bit, Capcom is creating carbon copies of the coin-op *Super SFII* and *Super Turbo* for the Saturn and PlayStation. Unfortunately, many *SF* fans' absolute favorite, *SFII Turbo*, is not included, but the super-secret bonus hidden game (we can't say anything yet, but you'll be very, very happy with it. Truly a game you never expected to get at home) makes up for this loss.

As conversions go, *Collection* is pretty damn exact: Besides some minor frame loss (mainly on the four New Challengers) that could very well be fixed, this is the arcade game. Akuma is also immediately selectable in *Super Turbo*, but besides that you're getting the arcade games. It does seem odd to include *Super*, as *Super Turbo* has original character codes, but... without it, it just wouldn't be a *Street Fighter II* collection, now would it? (Hint!)

We'll have a review of *Collection* for both Saturn and PlayStation as soon as Capcom makes a final version available. We (meaning me) can't wait to reveal that hidden third game... So, until then! **SNR**





P PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEV. - CAPCOM	# OF PLAYERS - 2
PUB. - CAPCOM	DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SUMMER

SHIN ROX
笑止!!





PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - TOP DOG	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - ASC GAMES	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER '97

GLITCH Take it to the...?







One of last year's best off-road racing games is back for a second time in *TNN Hardcore 2*. ASC and developers Top Dog are preparing the sequel, featuring loads of new tracks, trucks, and insane conditions.

ASC is ambitious. They claim to have an amazing 60 fps engine in preparation for *Hardcore 2*. The version we played was definitely NOT pulling 60 fps, but more power to 'em if they can get it up and running. Either way, *Hardcore 2* is a sequel in the purest sense of the word. This time around there's 16 all-new tracks, including The Grand Canyon, Las Vegas Desert, Colorado Mountains, New Orleans Swampland, and Indoor Stadium. They're much bigger than the tracks in the original *Hardcore*, with huge, wide open environments, and massive dips and hills. Expect 10 new trucks, all of them highly detailed models designed from the ground up.

There will also be a number of other features, including night time driving and weather-related conditions (snow, rain, fog, etc.) More *Hardcore 2* details should be coming soon, including (hopefully) a few new playable tracks. *G*

COLLIDERZ

In 2021, inter-alien violence has become a huge problem. In an effort to end the madness, the CCL (Colliderz Combat League) was formed in order to sort out all alien disputes race under one set of rules. That's the exciting (*riiight*) story behind *Colliderz*, ASC's upcoming entry into the cyber-sports genre.

Colliderz is a September title, and as such the gameplay is still very early. Commanding small hovering vehicles (not people or cyborgs) you must battle for possession of a floating glow-ball and launch it into the opposition's goal to score. Thus far, ramming the competition is enough to get control of the ball, but that should change as ASC are planning to add weapons to the multitude of selectable vehicles. By project's end, the total amount of unique *Colliderz* crafts will number in the thousands!

Colliderz will feature loads of game modes, including championships, tournaments, and grudge matches. Expect 16 teams, 20 arenas, power-ups, shields, and a multi-player mode. You can also customize your team, vehicles, and weaponry to meet your personal preferences. Well, that's it for *Colliderz* at this point... We'll keep you in the loop. *G*













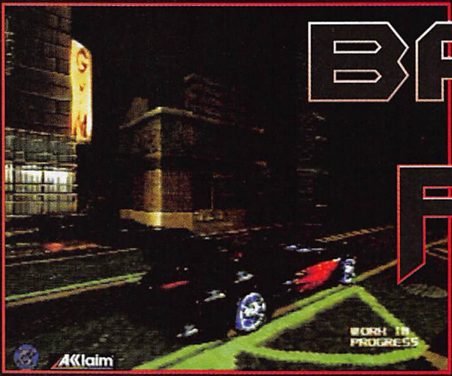
PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ADRENALIN ENT.	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - ASC GAMES	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER '97

GLITCH Another year of cyber-sports...

IN DEVELOPMENT

HOLY SCOOP-TASTIC, BATMAN! GAMEFAN HAS A HOT EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE CREATIVE YET CRIMINAL MINDS BEHIND THE INCREDIBLE, ALL-NEW PLAYSTATION BATMAN GAME



BATMAN & ROBIN

To the disgust of the assembled GameFan posse (except perhaps for Shidoshi), Chief Hambleton recently stripped butt-naked, covered himself in talc, struggled into a tight rubber outfit and a pair of pointy ears and leapt from building to building. This strange summoning ritual was to uncover the latest scoop on the new Batman and Robin game. Fortunately, his bat-signals weren't in vain, as scooting across the Atlantic from their Croydon (near London) headquarters came Joe Bonar (Project Leader) and Guy Mills (Lead Artist)



HOLY SCREENSHOTS BATMAN! EXCLUSIVE BATMAN & ROBIN PICS

GameFan battled for many hours to wrestle these burning shots from those caped crusaders of justice.

Batman and Robin is in two distinct parts; a Tomb Raider-style romp through various Gotham locales, interspersed with a Die Hard III-style epic race through the streets in the Batmobile. We spoke to Probe at great length about the size of the game, the differences between this and previous Probe products, and just why they've got a special 'cape' programmer working solely on the Bat-team's wafting rubber cloaks. The result is a somewhat 'freeform' interview, packed with all manner of interesting tidbits. We take up the 'chat' as we watch the Batmobile zip around a 3D polygon city...

JB: Essentially, what we wanted to do was to take the technology that we used in Die Hard [With a Vengeance] and expand on it so you have really huge environment. We originally planned on Gotham being 60 square kilometers, but you kept on getting lost!

CH: Batman has stepped out of the Batmobile to investigate a building. Is there a sequential plot, or can you essentially go anywhere?

JB: Batman has received and deciphered a clue. You're never given anything obviously in this game; like "GO TO THE EXIT" OR "PICK THIS ITEM AND DO THIS." You start in the Batcave and must use Batman's problem-solving abilities. Batman will see a clue on the street or on his computer and act on it, and so the game progresses.

CH: So this is a lot more complicated than just a 3D version of the usual Batman side-scrolling beat-'em-up?

JB: Absolutely. Gotham is ten square kilometers big, totally open and you can go anywhere at any time. However, the bad guys have got their own agenda. They're up to no good and acting out the roles they play in the film. Mr. Freeze is going around knocking off the Diamond Mart, stealing stuff from the museum and then freezing the whole place. He's doing exactly what he does in the film. You have to get there before he does, or, while he's there in order to kick his arse [Note: British terminology for the American word 'ass']. If you kick his arse, he'll regroup and carry with his objectives, as will Poison Ivy.

CH: Batman has entered the museum now. Tell us about the cut-scenes.

GM: In order to provide people with a more 'filmic' experience, you go up to the door, and when it opens, the whole building is swung round in real-time. This gives a little bit of theme-setting while the game loads off the CD. There's FMV in it as well, but the real-time cut-scenes keep you in a believable environment. You're never pulled out of the environment and that's one reason why Tomb Raider was so successful.

CH: Now that we're in the museum, the action is very much like Tomb Raider. What's Batman's plan now?

JB: Well, he's trying to get the crystal before Mr. Freeze does.

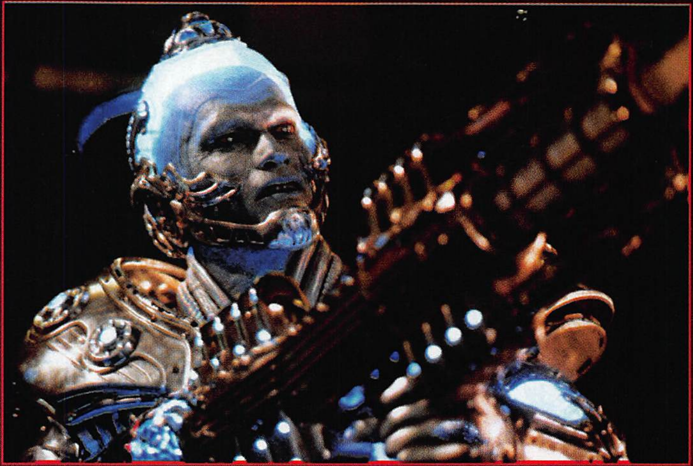


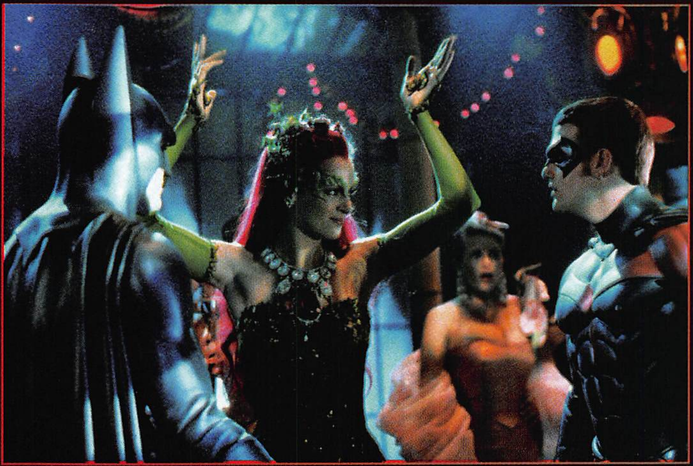
HOLY RGB SCREENS! THE FIRST SHOTS OF BATMAN & ROBIN, THE GLORIOUS 3D ROMP THROUGH THE STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY.



HOLY PROGRAMMERS, BATMAN! JOE BONAR, PROJECT LEADER

"Essentially, what we wanted to do was to take the technology that we used in Die Hard [With a





in fighting mode and paces around a little more slowly in detective mode. You have an action button which is used to look, examine, use or fight, kick or punch. All three characters [*you can play as Batman, Robin or Batgirl*] have loads of fighting moves and each individual has some unique special moves. Batgirl has some dirty [*Note: British terminology for the word 'unfair' or 'devious'*] moves; Robin has some dirty moves as well. They're a little bit like combos. When you get into a fight, the camera moves slightly up and to the side so you can see a bit more of what's going on.

You can side-step, climb and jump and have a lot of 'Bat-gadgets' to use as well. Warner Brothers has kindly let us use some of their Hasbro toys so we can have some fairly devastating weapons in there. Batman will also have his unique style of fighting; you'll be able to hold a bad guy up and smack him while at the same time pushing someone behind him. And there's loads of big weapons as well! You can also swap characters at any time. You must return to the Bat Cave though. However, you could play Batgirl all the way through the game, but you'd have to play a sneaky game! I'll give you an example. Say you came into a huge room as Batman and it was full of bad guys. You'd beat everyone up and continue. But Batgirl would have to climb up onto the balcony and sneak past. She's the only one who's light enough to stand on the balcony. Similarly, Batman has great strength, but his weight can trigger traps that other characters can avoid. Robin is the medium character between the two.

CH: Is there going to be a set of difficulty levels?

JB: No. The reason is that if we have three characters and loads of difficulty settings, we'd be developing for another year! But it starts off straightforward and gets nastier the further you go along. Eventually, the whole of Gotham is frozen, and then you'll have to change your mode of transport. Also, each character has two different costumes. Batman has a really cool armored costume which he uses later into the game. Really nice and silver!

CH: What about replay value?

JB: The game isn't the same every time you play it. There's a game clock which runs over three days, and certain events will happen at set times. What we've also done is produce other events between the set events that occur randomly. You know what's coming next, but not exactly where it's going to happen or when it's going to happen; clues help you to find these thing out. But it's not so random that it becomes annoying. We're also taking advantage of the fact that Batman is such a top bloke [*Note: British terminology for the expression 'great guy'*], and can't stand to see anyone suffer. There'll be muggings going on in the street, and Batman will be driving to the Diamond Mart, he knows Freeze is there, but someone's robbing a bank nearby. "Oh what am I going to do?! I know, I'll beat these guys up and hope to get there in time!"

HOLY MOTION PICTURES, BATMAN! ACTION FROM BATMAN & ROBIN

"We've been very lucky in getting snippets of dialog from the actual movie, as well as the faces for the entire main cast."

CH: Are the actual actors recording speech for the game?

JB: We've been very lucky in getting snippets of dialog from the actual movie, as well as the faces for the entire main cast. We wanted to enable a player to actually take part in the movie they'd just seen and to further suspend their disbelief, we got the real (dialog). For example, Arnie says [*adopts unconvincing Scandinavian accent*] "Chill!" You've got all the great one-liners. We want to give the player an experience. However, you don't have to watch the film to play the game, but it might help!

CH: How long has this game been in development?

JB: Well, since *Alien Trilogy* started [*around mid-1995*]. We took the best bits of *Alien Trilogy* and *Die Hard* and refined it and refined it some more. *Batman* as a project has been around for about 11 months [*as of Friday May 2, 1997*] and we've got about 4 months to finish and then test it until we're happy with it. It will be tested at Probe in May.

CH: The game certainly looks impressive enough. Did you make a conscious decision to try something different?

JB: This was an absolutely 100 percent conscious decision to get away from *Final Fight*! It really isn't like any other previous Batman game. Originally it was going to be a first-person [*Doom-style*], but we really wanted to put the cape in, and so that we could see the Batman model, we zoomed the camera out and we thought, "Aw this just looks so COOL!! But how are we going to do the cape?" We're tackling the cape problem in four ways; in software, as a sprite, part of the soft-skin and, er, another way that I can't remember.

Going back to the soft skin again, the character is made up of bones. The motion that we capture is applied to the bones, and then we have a skin over the top which is a mesh of polygons. Then a piece of software defines the relationship between the bones and the skin. A hard skin on an arm crunches into the body with polygon break-up. A soft skin stretches the polygons instead to make the character more natural.

With the cape, we tried animation and sprites, but it was too time consuming; it would have taken our animators three months just to draw every eventuality, and a great fat sprite would have looked mad! Drawing each sprite would have driven our artists completely bonkers and would have looked a bit pants as well [*Note: 'pants' is a British expression, in this case used to mean 'unconvincing'*]. So what we did was construct it in software. They said it couldn't be done... but we did it! We've attached an 8-by-4 mesh of polygons and made a flag algorithm so when the character moves, the cape flows with it, falling onto the elbows and creating a realistic effect [*Note: The effect is very similar to the warps in Turok*]. The model pushes the cape out rather than jutting through it. We have a 'cape programmer' skilled in pure maths who's taking the next three months to program it all!

Finally, this game is cerebral. I think people are tired of just hitting enemies on screen. Of course there's character battles, but I think people are ready for a more thoughtful style of exploration play. And of course, you get to drive all the cool vehicles!

CH: Thank you very much for taking time out to show us the game.

Chief Hambleton and the entire GameFan staff would like to thank Joe Bonar, Guy Mills, Acclaim and Warner Bros. Interactive.





HOLY SKETCHINGS, BATMAN! GUY MILLS, LEAD ARTIST

"There's FMV in it as well, but the real-time cut scenes keep you in a believable environment."

FELONY 11-79



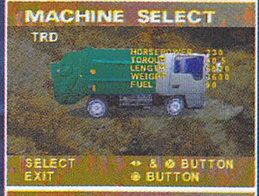




















Some remarkably 'kerazy' car antics are soon to appear courtesy of ASCII and their newest (and certainly best) racing/carnage title, *Felony 11-79*. A direct port of the Japanese title *Runabout*, ASCII has wisely decided to bring this over to America as soon as possible and with good reason; those gamers weaned on a diet of *Ridge Racer* and *Twisted Metal* are going to adore this epitome of arcade cruising carnage! Why? Because it features all the best parts of these three titles and mixes them up into a perfect driving frenzy!

First, there's cars. 22 of them. Yep, that's right! And these aren't your average paint-swapped racers either! Nope, we're talking limousines, Mini Coopers, street sweepers, scooters, Lamborghinis (even a tank!); you name it, *Felony 11-79* has a drivable version in here! Sure, you start with four cars, and then (with the police hot on your tail) you cruise through road blocks, over billboards and through hotel lobbies in a frenzy of driving annihilation in downtown and seaside areas of Japan, Chinatown and Paris!!

So, you're flying down the highway with the cops hunting you down and suddenly... BAM! Your already-molested motor bursts into flames! Time to hop out of your vehicle and hunt another down! Then the nail-bitingly tense action continues as you hot-wire your next motor; it screeches into life and you swerve to dodge entire squads of the law's finest. "Traffic laws? Pah! Ramming speed!!" was the scream as insanely packed streets were weaved through in an epic chase to rival *The Italian Job*!

Add to the mix some real-time light-sourcing and car deformation ("Oops, me wheel's off!" you'll cry as sparks light up the underside of your car), completely navigable streets and different secret vehicles appearing depending on your progress, and you're well on your way to understanding how hot this game looks! In fact, the only problem we have is the game's actual title. After phoning the L.A. Sheriff's Department, we were told that a 'Felony 11-79' was "failure to appear in court" so quite why the cops are "responding to a Felony 11-79 in progress" (to quote ASCII's advertising blurb) and thirty cop cars are chasing your player across town for a late judicial appearance remains somewhat of a mystery to us. But hey, the game looks so good, we'll let ASCII off on good behavior. **CH**





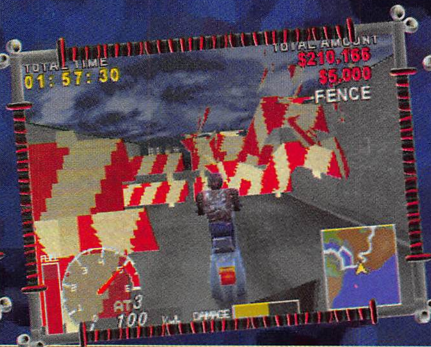






100% SPEED!







P PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CLIMAX	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - ASCII	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER



CHIEF HAMBLETON
Cool car carnage courtesy of Climax!





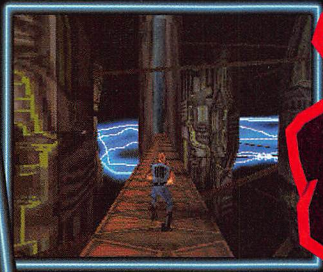












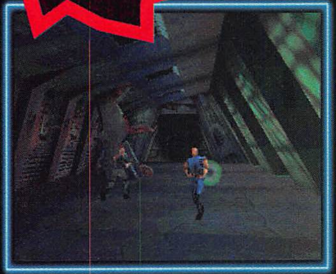
Apocalypse

"STARRING" BRUCE WILLIS















This month, GameFan got their hands on a two level playable demo of Activision's forthcoming shooter--the first ever videogame to star a major A-list Hollywood star: Bruce Willis. The demo is ultra-early (almost pre-alpha) but the various gameplay elements are starting to come together, and even though there's a long way to go, we were still able to get a sense of what producer Michael Kirby and his team are aiming for: a 32-bit update of classic overhead shooters like **Commando** and **Ikari Warriors.**

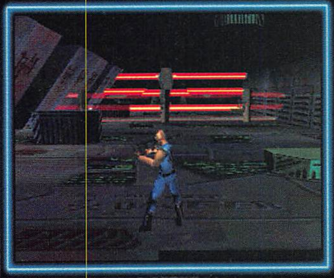
The playable demo consists of the first two levels of the game: the prison stage, where Trey Kincaid (Bruce Willis) breaks you out, and the rooftop stage immediately following. The levels are large (Activision has employed asynchronous loading) with detailed environments and interactive scenery. I particularly like the **Tron**-style prison cells that you run along on top of as you make your escape, with screaming prisoners contained within.

Activision has wisely decided to go with a **Robotron X**-style control setup (the four main buttons fire in all four directions), leaving the L and R buttons free for secondary functions like jumping and crouching. It's an instinctive system, and one which demonstrates Activision's commitment towards gameplay. With a project this big, it's nice to know that the developers have their feet firmly planted on the ground.

Currently, Bruce Willis' character is not yet implemented, but in the final version he will act as a computer controlled player 2, fighting alongside you and responding to your performance with comments and actions of his own. The intelligent camera system was also not functioning properly, though occasionally it would move to set a tag for dramatic effect, like looking down on you as you jump the gap between two roof tops. More as we get it. ***K***







PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ACTIVISION	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



KNIGHTMARE
Smash TV meets *Commando*, in 3D, starring Bruno?!

· G-Police ·

PSYGNOSIS · SHOOTING · WINTER



G-Police lives! First appearing as one of Psygnosis' initial PlayStation announcements, this *Blade Runner*-influenced shooter was thought lost forever when it disappeared from the release list last year. Well, it's back, and looking better than ever! *G-Police* features an impressive real-time 3D environment, fast action, and over 35 varied missions all wrapped around a unique concept and solid storyline. Piloting a heavily-armed Havoc jet helicopter, it is up to you to keep the streets and skyways of Callisto (yeah, the Jupiter Moon Callisto) free from evil—meanwhile trying to solve the mysterious death of your sister, a former *G-Police* pilot. Look for a preview in our E3 report next issue!







· Tomb Raider 2 ·

EIDOS · ADVENTURE · OCTOBER

Now this is the game to watch for... *Tomb Raider 2* takes the captivating play design from the original, and massively upgrades it with much more intricate levels, all-new day and night modes, the ability to ride a jet-ski, new weapons and items, new hair styles (!) and much, much more. Look for a full preview, along with a bunch of new shots, next month. For now, take a look at these pictures, and dream... Less than four months to go!



(Please note: These shots are from the PC version)



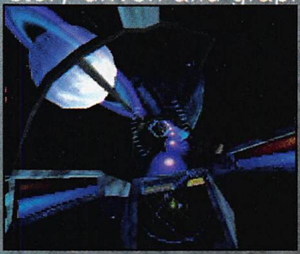




· Colony Wars ·

PSYGNOSIS · SHOOTER · WINTER

This 3D combat sci-fi shooter is Psygnosis' latest PlayStation announcement. *Colony Wars* puts you in the role of a rookie pilot, caught in the middle of a vicious war to free your people from the stranglehold of the Empire. While the basic storyline doesn't sound that original, the story-driven and graphically impressive game-



play promises to push *CW* beyond any space shooter you've ever experienced! Just look at these screen shots! We'll have a full preview in the near future!

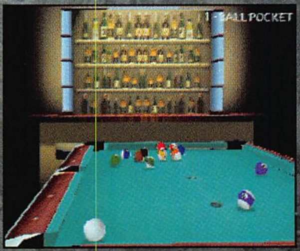




· Carom Shot ·

ASCII · SIMULATION · WINTER

In the tradition of... well, pool games, comes ASCII's *Carom Shot*. While pool titles have never really enticed the video game crowd, ASCII hopes to change that with *Carom Shot*, which is being presented more as a story-based simulation title. As a pro pool player, you'll have to bet and hustle your way through nine different stages (office, China Town, etc.), battling on tables that feature ultra-realistic ball physics.







· Overboard! ·

PSYGNOSIS · ACTION · WINTER.

YES! Finally, full pirating action comes to the PlayStation! Er... well, *Overboard* is certainly one of Psygnosis' more unique titles in their hol-



iday line-up, and believe it or not, it might be one of the coolest. Stepping into the shoes of a pirate, you've got to build up your fleet, do pirate-like things (such as pillaging and such) and take down one of the deadliest souls on the ocean—Blowfleet. Could be fun!







· Return Fire 2 ·

MGM · ACTION/STRAT. · WINTER

Originally rumored to have been M2-bound, *Return Fire 2* recently appeared on the PlayStation release list, courtesy of MGM. *Return Fire 2* greatly enhances the simple (but very fun) gameplay found in the original with the addition of a selection of new vehicles (including water-based units), radi-



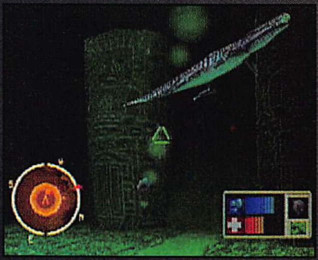
cally different maps (cities, deserts, etc.), a variety of weather conditions, all new multiplayer modes and an enhanced one player game. These new features, and the fact that the award-winning original *Return Fire*'s creator is designing this addition, could mean MGM has a hit on their hands.



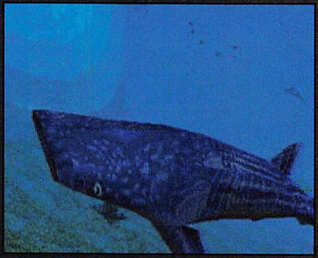
• Treasures of the Deep •

NAMCO • ADVENTURE • WINTER

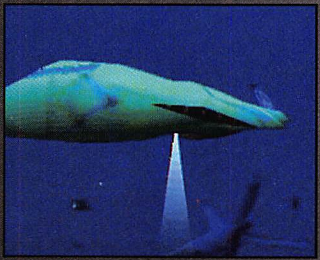


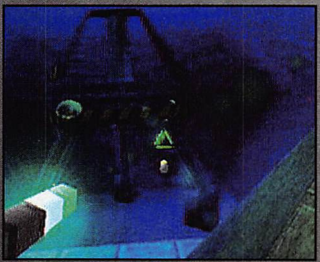


Treasures of the Deep allows you to explore Earth's last frontier, while constantly hunting down fabled lost treasures, fighting off other hunters, and battling against the occasional giant scaly boss. Originally developed by Black Ops, the talented folks responsible for *Black Dawn* and *Agile Warrior F-111X*, Namco quickly purchased the rights to distribute *Treasures*—and it's easy to see why. Described as an underwater *Tomb Raider* by many, *Treasures* immerses you in an intricate ocean world—yours to fully experience. You can skim along the ocean floor, dive into ancient ruins, or protect a rare breed of sea turtles from becoming extinct. While most of the missions are based around finding certain (well hidden) treasures, other levels deal with environmental issues and the like. From what we've seen, *Treasures of the Deep* has high potential to become one of the ever-increasing number of "must have" PlayStation titles. Look for a full preview very soon!









• Psybadek •

PSYGNOSIS • RACING • WINTER



Leave it up to the team who brought us *WipeOut* to create a new look in racing games, this time in the form of Psygnosis' *Psybadek*. Don't let the name, or strange characters, deter you from this totally intuitive racing/platforming title. With a graphical look apparently influenced by Japanese Anime, *Psybadek* puts you in the role as a deformed little dude, who has to out-race (and out-perform) the competition in order to save his friends. Sure, it looks and sounds silly, but Psygnosis promises a fast engine and lots of fun... Who knows, this could be the surprise hit of the year! Reubus, our resident *CoolBoarders* expert, can't wait to see this one in action!







· Army Men ·

3DO · ACTION/STRAT. · EARLY '98



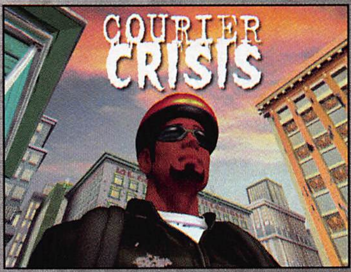
3DO enters the PlayStation market strong with the conversion of their promising PC title, *Army Men*. What makes *Army Men* so good? Not only does it have strong action/strategy gameplay (very similar to *Herzog Zwei*), hot 3D rendered graphics and amazing animation, but you get to send little green army men into battle! Cool! In the attempt to make this game as "realistic" as possible, 3DO spent unimaginable amounts of time making the characters and vehicles appear to be truly made of plastic, right down to the way they melt when hit with a flame thrower. This attention to detail, along with the extensive strategic gameplay elements, makes Army Men a strong contender in the quickly-flooding console action/strategy market. "Don't stop, even if they shoot yer arms off, boys!"

Please note: These shots are from the PC version.









· Courier Crisis ·

BMG · RACING/ACTION · WINTER

Seemingly heavily motivated by the gameplay found in *Road Rash*, *Courier Crisis* has you speeding down long streets, punching and kicking the opposition, while at the same time avoiding traffic and other obstacles. Sound familiar? Well, this time you're on a bike instead of a motorcycle—along with facing distinct "missions" to complete rather than just trying to win a race. GT Bicycle professional riders were brought in to enhance the gameplay, and the development team designed a new "organic" animation style to give *CC* an impressive graphical flare. *Courier Crisis* looks to be the perfect "fix" for those who long for the next *Road Rash*...









· Clock Tower ·

ASCII · ADVENTURE · FALL





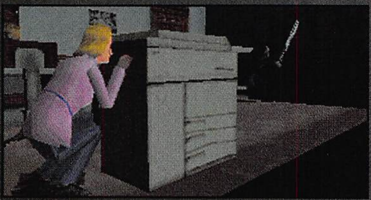
If *D* and *Resident Evil* have taught us anything, it's that unsettling games can be downright fun. And in knowing the unfortunate lack of titles in this genre, ASCII is bringing over one of Japan's most popular 'horror' games, *Clock Tower 2*. Re-labeled *Clock Tower* in America, this game puts you (for all intents and purposes) directly into a classic horror movie. You play as a young female who knows something is wrong, amongst stupidly oblivious companions who fail to realize the approaching evil. Familiar theme, eh? You spend most of the game trapped in a huge mansion, continually chased by a scissors-wielding serial killer. It's up to you to save your friends, and yourself, by using objects around the house to slow him down. From what we've seen of the Japanese original, it's safe to say *CT* will certainly appeal to those who seek a bit of thrill in their game-playing. Oh yeah, we must also mention the game takes place in the heart of all things dark and evil. That's right... Norway!

You've been warned...









· Motor Mash ·

TBA · RACING · TBA

"More fun than a drunk baboon. On roller skates." Yes! If that official tag-line doesn't get you excited about *Motor Mash*, I don't know what would... Anyway, once you get over that unsettling quote, the rest of the game starts looking better. *Motor Mash*, to put it simply, is a humorous rally racing title filled with themed tracks and silly drivers. It does have impressive graphics though, and the track design (filled with interactive shortcuts) appears to be top-notch, meaning *Motor Mash* could turn out to be quite a solid racer. Look for more on *Motor Mash* in an upcoming issue of GameFan. Um, maybe.





Please note: These shots are from the PC version.









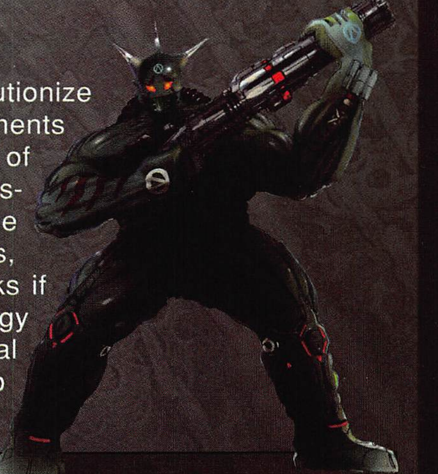




· Uprising ·

3DO · ACTION/STRAT. · EARLY '98

3DO's first PC (and soon to be first PlayStation) game just might revolutionize the way people think of action/strategy titles. Combining the best elements from both military sims and 3D shooters, *Uprising* puts you in command of a high-tech tank (labeled a "Wraith") against a formidable army in a realistic 3D world. Separating this title from other tank-based shooters is the fact you are also in command of an army of allied troops, tanks, gunships, and bombers; all of which need to be directed to complete certain tasks if you ever hope to leave the battlefield victorious. And as in most strategy games, you can upgrade your army's weapons (along with your personal unit) by researching new technologies. *Uprising* also boasts the ability to play quick arcade-type missions, or large-scale campaigns complete with over 30 involving scenarios.



Please note: These shots are from the PC version.







· Shadow Master ·

PSYGNOSIS · SHOOTER · WINTER







Hmm... Psygnosis must love the holiday season. Anyway, their sixth title scheduled for this winter might have a familiar gameplay engine, but *Shadow Master* could turn out to be one of the more "visually stimulating" shooters ever released. Based on the futuristic/organic artwork of British designer Rodney Matthews, *SM* has ultra-detailed environments and dramatic graphical effects (such as dynamic lighting and the almost-standard lens flares). Each mission takes place in a large 3D world, infested with spectacular enemies; which include giant spiders, dragons, tryphids and the like. Also, most of the levels require you to complete some storyline-influenced task (such as protecting an area, or destroying a reactor), and many also feature spectacular-looking bosses to fight.







IN DEVELOPMENT

Recently, Knightmare traveled to Todd McFarlane's studios in Phoenix, Arizona to talk to the Canadian artist about his role in the creation of the Spawn videogame, amongst other things. This is what happened...



SPAWN

GF: How did Spawn come to be?

Todd: I guess I created him in about '78, '79. Everybody doodles. As a comic book guy, everybody creates their own characters. So by the time I broke into comics in '84, he was just something that I had in my portfolio. The tougher part came when we actually started Image (McFarlane's publishing company) and I had to give a life and a universe to this guy.

GF: What sources did you draw on for inspiration?

Todd: I had to ask myself, what's this guy gonna be about? And the easy answer is: What if I was Spawn? What would I do in this situation? Given that I don't really consider myself to be a strong writer, you just have to play to your own strengths. So who do I know better than anybody else? Me. And who's important to me? My wife, Wanda.

GF: Spawn's wife is also called Wanda.

Todd: It's not by accident that Spawn's wife is named Wanda or that his best pal is Terry Fitzgerald. I just interject personal things in the book. But you know, I don't pay attention to that anymore. People just think it's a joke when they meet these characters in real life. "Yeah sure, you're Terry Fitzgerald!"

GF: Spawn has a very stylized look. How important do you consider that to the book's success?

Todd: That's the biggest thing that anybody can come up with. What sets artists apart is their style. Not so much their talent, although talent is tied into style, but more the idea of how does each artist paint that apple. And then mix that in with the body of work and do enough issues of a character and all of a sudden it just clicks. It's like, Flash isn't the coolest guy on earth, but he's been around forever. Everybody knows Flash.

GF: Do you read a lot of comics?

Todd: No. Not now.

GF: But you used to?

Todd: I used to read a lot of comic books. I also used to watch TV and go see the odd movie.

GF: Were you influenced by any of these things?

Todd: What I put into my work are the things that I remember about the other stuff. Not what it actually was, but what I remember it as being—the sensation that I was left with. And that's the sensation I try to convey. Spawn is about mood, and about atmosphere, and weirdness, and an attitude. It's not just about a guy who's 6 foot 3 and has to find his wife. It's about the bigger element.

GF: Spawn is a lot darker than most of the mainstream stuff. Any particular reason?

Todd: I just like the creepy stuff. The weird stuff. Once you have that piece in your brain, and obviously I got it there... I just like to play with it. I don't need to be inspired by too many things. I'm just, "Oh, that's kind of creepy, I'll use that." I just make stuff up.

GF: Give us an example.

Todd: Ok, I had to convey the essence of evil. So how do I do it? Well most people see good as white and bad as black. Even in cowboy movies. So evil is black, and that means that evil manifests itself at night, when there's no light.

"Spawn is about mood, and about atmosphere, and weirdness, and an attitude."



Spawn shots from early development version.






The people who 'get' Spawn are also the people who play videogames.

Ok, so who are the conduits of evil? Who absorbs the evil on the planet? Well my wife's a biologist and I remember her saying that worms don't have eyes. They're creatures that live under the ground in darkness, and if they ever come to the surface, because they have no eyes, they're still in darkness. So somehow worms are the sponges of evil. Now a worm in itself isn't creepy, but if you take 10 million worms and you pour them over someone, then that's the coolest thing! So all of sudden you do the thing where he's got worms all over him, or he's got worms in his mouth, and it creates this great effect. The end result is actually much cooler then the beginning which is: I need something without eyeballs. You go, "Whoa! Worms! Millions of worms! Conduits of evil!" That's a kooky thing!

GF: Are you worried about the religious implications of Spawn's story? Are you trying to interpret the bible?

Todd: Actually I find the best thing to do is just make stuff up. If you stay too true to the bible as is, that's almost more insulting. It's almost better to just go 25 feet away from it.

GF: From your talk earlier I got the feeling that you're not really that interested in videogames. Does that mean you're not interested in the Spawn game?

Todd: It's not that I'm not interested in the games, it's just I'm not very adept at them. I mean, I'm a psycho for hockey and I can't even skate! So it doesn't preclude me from being impressed by a game. It's just that if you gave one to me, I wouldn't really know how to work it. What I'm more concerned about is to think, "What would be cool, if I could play?" I just pretend I'm a pro. I go, "If I was making a Spawn game I'd like this and this and this."

GF: So what kind of input have you had on the Spawn game?

Todd: Well obviously all the big stuff. You know, the characters and the levels.

GF: Have you had any influence on the way the game plays?

Todd: What has ended up happening is that my ignorance of games is actually beneficial. I'll ask them (Sony) about things which may or may not be possible in a game, and sometimes I'll trip over an answer which is, "We never thought of that. We can do that—it's just nobody's ever asked that question before." The last time Sony was here we went over 25 things and on at least three of them they were like, "Why not? We can do that." And I didn't know that you couldn't. I didn't know there were games out there that didn't do that.

GF: Can you give us an example?

Todd: Well, for instance when Spawn's running through the catacombs and there's light hitting him, why can't the light affect him? Why isn't he lit? And also every time he's running, why is everything in the background kind of straight line, straight floor stuff? Why is the perspective always so square? Can't we tilt some angles? Because depth comes from creating more than one or two planes. In comic books you can stretch and contract the panel to create the illusion of depth. But because the plane of your TV screen is always the same, and because you can't move the camera around too much, the answer is to create the depth in the environment.

GF: How do you do that?

Todd: Ok, let me give you an example of something I think we're gonna put in there: Spawn's running through the catacombs. Why does he always have to run kind of forward? Why can't the hall squeeze or taper? Then maybe he'll have to turn sideways, and kind of inch himself through. Or why can't the ceiling lower, so that he has to get down and crawl and then come out. I mean it's still basically getting him from point A to point B, but what it adds in my mind is body language. If he just runs the same way as a 100 other characters then what makes the game different? That's what I'm concerned with. I know you have to do things basically within a set formula, but is there anyway we can add a little salt and pepper to the meat?

GF: Are you happy with the way your characters look as polygon models?

Todd: They've explained to me that there's two different ways to do it. You can go the polygon route or you can go the 2D sprite route, where the characters actually look photo-realistic but it limits the gameplay. Given that we didn't have access to the movie costumes or some of the really cool stuff when the project started, it was like, which one of the two methods would give us the most creative freedom? Especially since we're dealing with a lot of figures that aren't human. I mean, I can see that in Mortal Kombat's case, where you've got real people, it makes sense to use digitized graphics. But we're dealing with some really odd shaped creatures. They're not men in rubber suits. So let's do the best we can given that this is the box we have to work within.

GF: Do you think videogames are an appropriate medium for Spawn?

Todd: When I started this big roller coaster ride, I felt that there were four areas which were important: TV, movies, electronics and toys. I thought that, if I could hit all four of those blocks, then I could build something very strong. And electronics and videogames is one of those blocks. It's not a throwaway idea. "That's toothpaste and that's the other stuff." Because it's the same kind of audience as the other parts. The people who 'get' Spawn are also the people who play videogames.

GF: You think there's a crossover in the audience?

Todd: Sure. But on the other hand, there's a lot of people that buy videogames that have never even heard of Spawn or seen one of my toys and maybe won't even go to the movie. But if the videogame is cool and has this eerie atmosphere and is something that doesn't try to pander, then maybe when they see a commercial that has all those same edges to it, they might be more inclined to go, "Well, the game's kind of cool, and if the movie's anything like the game..." And I'm not saying the movie is like the game, but I think the edge is the same on both of them, and if you like the dark, moody atmosphere of the game, and the creepiness of it, then I think you'll like the other things I do.

GF: You mentioned earlier about your plans after Spawn. Do you ever feel the need to start something different?

Todd: A part of me says, "You've done Spawn, you've hit this market, now try something else." The two markets that I haven't hit are adults and kids. You know, the mom that won't endorse Spawn, and the kids that are too young for Spawn. My guess would be that if I was to exercise anything further down the line it wouldn't be, necessarily, more manifestations of my adolescent stuff, although I think that's the coolest pool to dip into. But I'd like to say: here's something for Dad, here's something for the teenagers and here's something for the kids and they're not connected. I got a 5 year old kid. They're not going to watch the animation. So I'd like to do something for them.

GF: Thanks for your time.

Todd: No problem.



ClayFighter 63⅓

As key elements begin to be installed into Interplay's much anticipated first N64 release, *CF 63 'n a third*, the designers' vision of a comical parody of *MK* and *SF* is beginning to take shape. Carried out on both the Genesis and SNES with good results, the sparkling new N64 seems more than up to the task of taking clay poundage to a higher level. The huge 3D arenas are extremely well textured and the characters look almost real albeit in a Play-Dough kind of way.

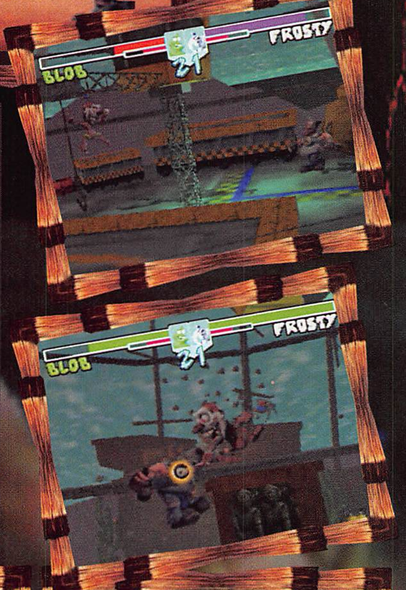
Most notable in this 75% burn were the new "break-throughs." In each area, doors/barriers leading into surrounding structures can be, well, broken through. Should you beat, slap, kick or smash your opponent into one, the both of you will quickly find a change of venue/locale. Some areas feature multiple possibilities so depending on how the playfield is turned, as you fight it out in 3D, you can take the fight in a variety of directions. Whether or not these determine where the next round will take place has yet to be determined.











Eleven initial characters have been chosen to pound 64-bit clay, five returning; Bad Mr. Frosty, Blob, Bonker, Icky Bod Clay and Taffy, and six new; Kung-Pow, BoogerMan, Houngan, HoboCop, Lady Liberty, and Dr. Kiln. EWJ along with others TBA will be selectable via a secret code (shhhh) which Interplay will release after the game debuts. If we find it before hand, well, we will of course leak it, as any respectable publisher would. (I'm kidding of course.)

As far as the gameplay thus far is concerned there's some good news, and, some bad. Of course,





UPDATE

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - INTERPLAY	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - 64-MEG CART	AVAILABLE - JULY



E. STORM
IT'S ALL ABOUT POUNDING 64-BIT CLAY!

the game's not near done so the bad will likely be corrected. Good, are the combo engine, control, graphics, light sourcing, and sound. Bad, is the game's speed and character animation. While enough (barely) frames do exist for each character, they currently move at such a low frame rate it's as if every other frame is missing. This seems easy enough to fix (add frames) so I'm confident the final will be fluid. As for the game's speed, the options menu exhibits three settings, normal, whoa, and "are you nuts?" So, presuming this version is running on normal, which I'm quite sure is the case, it's safe to assume that the speed problem is a non-issue. Also problematic in this version were the camera positions. It's hardly worth mentioning since I've been assured they're being fixed, but in case they're not, well, better safe than sorry. The circumference (wow, big word, huh) of each playfield is littered with polygonal objects like crates, lab equipment, tombstones (well, you get the picture). Since they turn as you move within them, these objects come directly into view, often hiding the action until you move into the clear. I imagine that in the final they'll either go transparent or the camera will adjust by panning up. Either way, it's on the list of fixes as the game enters its final month of programming.

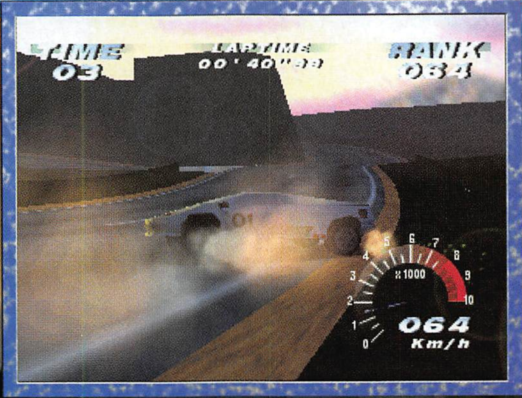
Once the final touches are applied expect nothing less than a fighter which not only looks fantastic but plays great, offers some new innovation and a few laughs as well. It's all in a good clay's work. ***ES***



LAMBORGHINI 64

Titus' *Lamborghini 64*, due in quarter 3 (along with just about everything else), features four different racing styles; Arcade, Tournament, Championship, and Time Trial. There's mention of a secret mode as well. But hey, look at these visuals huh? Wooo! There's only four tracks and, er, four cars (including that luxurious beast the Diablo SE) and a split screen mode is offered as well. There's a big ol' crop of N64 racers headed our way. We'll have more on this one real soon.













Ocean's got a high powered N64 racer of their own which we played extensively and were quite impressed with. *Multi* should be finished by the time you read this and is scheduled to appear in June. We'll review this first reality based N64 racer in the August issue.

MULTI-CHAMPIONSHIP RACING

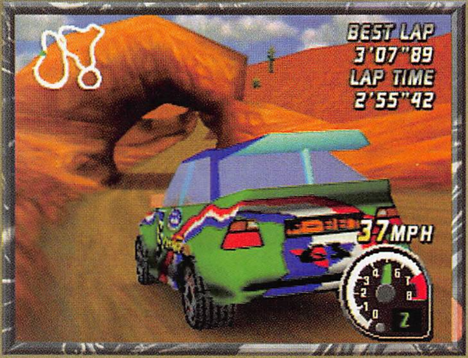




TOP GEAR RALLY











PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64

- DEVELOPER - BOSS
- PUBLISHER - KEMCO
- FORMAT - CART
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
- AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER '97



CHIEF HAMBLETON
No hideous cruisin' antics around here!

Boss Game Studios has been busy creating the first real driving game for the Nintendo 64. No plumbers on buggies or laughable cruisin' antics going on here; simply a load of polygon cars, huge roaming tracks and enough graphical prowess to gobsmack any potential driving junkie. With a September release currently scheduled for *Top Gear Rally*, we molested an 80 percent complete copy for an afternoon. The idea of *Top Gear Rally* was obviously to look at the most successful racing games (notably *Sega Rally* and *Ridge Racer*) and grab the best features while implementing a ton of extra cool innovations to improve on the already-winning formula. Once you're jolting down the muddy roads of *Top Gear Rally*, you'll immediately see the influences. The result looks to be a graphically impressive and marvelously playable rally racer with more cool features than should really be allowed for one video game.



Undoubtedly the finest aspects of *Top Gear Rally* are the car physics. There's one word to sum up the way the cars move: Boing!! That's right; each of the eleven motors available has four-wheel drive independent suspension, meaning that it drives exactly like a rally car should. Hit a sand-dune and you'll actually see your car's wheels whirl and grip separately as the car spins back onto the track. Of course, that's not all; everything from the suspension to the shocks and the steering to the wheels can be changed, depending on your preference for off-road driving. Finally, in a nod to the cool feature present in *Rage Racer*, Boss has gone one step further with their 'design your paint job' option. Now you can scrawl and daub whatever you want on the entire exterior of the car! It's as if a mini version of *Photoshop* was added for your artistic enjoyment! Watch for the Hambleton mobile when the review









CAR CAMERA ANTICS!

You can also take your throbbing motor for a ride in three different perspectives; chase car, hood and cockpit, and afterwards, there's always the two player mode to tangle with (complete with less impressive re-draw rates but little slow-down)! Finally, that 'kerazy' accessory, the Rumble Pak, is even catered for, so you too can experience a heavier joypad, a lack of saving and then a 'pager buzz' every time you hit a tree...

DIFFERENT WEATHER CONDITIONS!

Despite the lack of different textures, Boss has still squeezed in even more additions, such as the ability to race each course in fog, rain, snow, at night or in clear weather. These features are great; in particular, the fog mode shows how the game would have looked if the *Cruis'n USA* team had got their hands on this game, the snow mode features the entire track re-texture mapped, snow tires and spin-outs, while the clear weather features... wait for it... almost no pop-up!!

comes trundling by!

At the present time of writing, the cars (all modeled after real-life vehicles as any car buff can instantly tell) control like nothing else. As far as I'm concerned, this game has the best control of any rally racing game. And it's all about analog control, baby! Tweak the 3D stick slightly and your car's wheels shift a little. Yank on that control and your tires twist at insane angles, causing your vehicle to wrench to the side. Instantly intuitive, the actual play mechanics impressed me the most. Want to live a little more dangerously? Then try hand-braking around every corner! Accelerate and Brake together locks the back wheels, enabling some rather hairy skidding to be attempted (I must stress the word 'attempt' here), but once you've mastered the handling, you'll realize what sort of freakish math-based geniuses Boss Studios must have to implement the car movements. Add to the package some real-time car deformation ("Watch



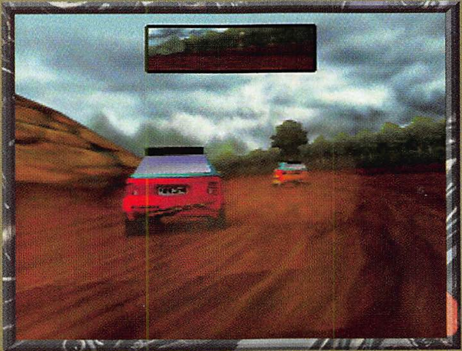














out for that rock!!" KRUNCH!!) and some really wicked jumps and you'll soon recognize what success Boss could achieve with this game.

Of course, all the physics in the world ain't gonna mean diddly squat if the tracks aren't up to scratch. Well, this is where I'm reserving judgment until the review. There's five tracks in total (Desert, Jungle, Coastline, Mountain and er, a secret one which we can't tell you about...), and for the most part, these are great. Cities, dirt tracks, secret routes and the very best undulating terrain combine. However, I was slightly worried by a couple of factors. Firstly, there's the sheer length of the courses... they're massive! So what's the problem? Well, with such an immense set of courses (one lap takes well over two minutes of professional driving), I found myself a little 'out on my own.' "Where's the other cars? I'm sure I passed one a couple of minutes ago..." Unfortunately, there's some really ugly and blurred 2D 'screens' of trees as well (think *Mario Kart 64*), and I also had problems with the track texture-maps; they're repeated much too often, leading to an unrealistic look on many rock, hedge and wall textures. But hey, that's the limitations of the cartridge format for you...

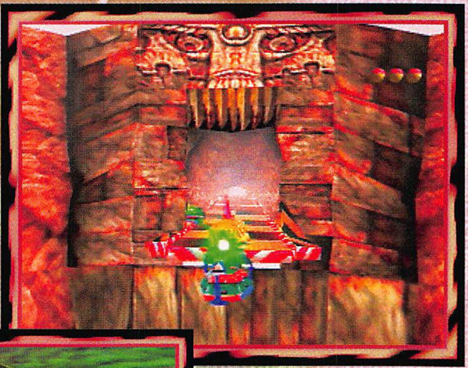


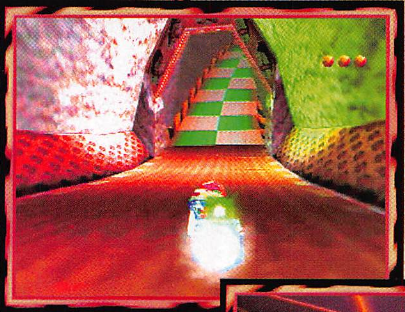
Despite these flaws, I'm sure you'll recognize that this game looks hot!! Aside from texture-map problems and some pretty horrendous music and sound-effects (perhaps Nintendo should have rethought that lack of sound chip in their hardware), this had me hooked for my entire afternoon. We also desperately encourage Boss Studios to include a load of the really cool debug features we saw in the final version (flying cars, 'z-buffering only' mode, chrome cars, that sort of thing) via a '*Turok*-style' code system. And while you're at it, how about an ultra-cheesy announcer singing "*Game Over... Yeeahhh!!*"? That would, as they say, rule. However, whatever the case, Boss Studios seem to have excelled in the area of quality racing, and *Top Gear Rally* should storm the game starved Nintendo 64 market come September. Look out Namco... ***CH***



Extreme G









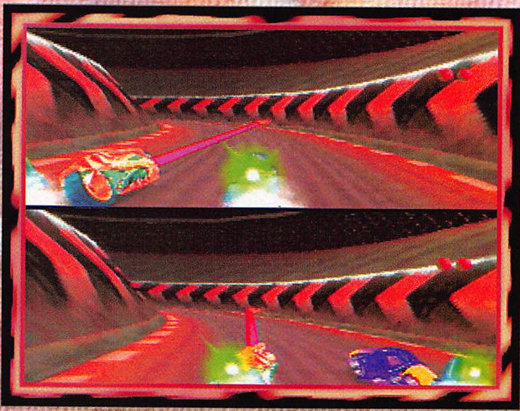
With the futuristic video game racing craze still in full effect, we knew it wouldn't be long before the Nintendo 64 jumped on the bandwagon and a 64-bit hyper-sled journey began. Along came Acclaim's Probe (those *Die-Hard* gents from Croydon, England) to fill the gap with the astonishing *Extreme G*. I write 'astonishing' for a number of reasons, the main one being the similarity between this and *WipeOut*. It's as if those Brits wandered up to Liverpool and kidnapped the Psygnosis crew for a couple of months; *Extreme G* isn't just a subtle nod towards a PlayStation classic, but a shockingly similar mimic, from the *Designer's Republic*-influenced decals to the roadway environments, weapons and... er... everything else.

However, to avoid courtroom-tastic confrontations, some attempt has been made to differentiate the two games. For a start, you ride on bikes instead of sleds, the tracks are much more impressive... and, erm... that's it. The cycles of *Extreme G* weave and bob about the tracks with eye-popping realism, and so they should; they're very impressively animated, swaying and bobbing just like those bikes in *Tron*. But the real stars of the show have to be the tracks themselves. Now I'm prone to a spot of raceway fever as much as the next lunatic, but the rollercoaster ride present in *Extreme G* had me reaching for my barf bag quicker than a Kenny G sax solo. The courses literally drop straight down into a vertical plummet, and then wrench you back upwards with an incredible sensation of speed. You'll be frantically lurching from one side of the raceway to the other in a desperate attempt to thwart that maniac behind you, and then the track mutates into a twisting corkscrew and you'll be zipping back upside down with the previous track underneath you! Motion sickness? Yes please!!

The fun doesn't end there either! Up to four players can wrestle for control of their bikes, and Probe has assured us that no detail or loss of speed will occur (mind you, that's what was said about *Mario Kart 64*). Add to this some... *interesting* music (classical, jazz and techno) and you (hopefully) have a sure-fire contender for fastest racer ever. Now if only that damn mist wasn't so intrusive... ***CH***











P PREVIEW | **NINTENDO 64**

- DEVELOPER - PROBE
- PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
- FORMAT - CARTRIDGE
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-4
- DIFFICULTY - N/A
- AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER '97



CHIEF HAMBLETON
Damn... mist again!

WIN A NINTENDO 64!



COMPLETE THE SURVEY BELOW AND YOU COULD WIN A NINTENDO 64!

We need to know who you are and what you're playing so we can better serve your specific needs. We'll enter each entry in a drawing and give away a Nintendo64 with Super Mario 64 to the lucky winner. The winner's name will be published in a future issue of GameFan. Xerox copies are of course welcome (to save the page).

Your Name________ Age____ Address________

City________ State____ Zip____ Male____ Female____

1. Which system(s) do you currently own?

Nintendo 64____ Saturn____
PlayStation____ Super NES____
Genesis____ GameBoy____
GameGear____ Other____

2. Do you have regular access to a personal computer?

Yes____ No____

3. Approximately how many hours a week do you play?

Home Video Games____
Arcade Video Games____
Computer (PC) Games____

4. Have you ever visited a video gaming website?

Yes____ No____

5. Have you ever visited www.gamefan.com?

Yes____ No____

6. How many games do you buy per year?

____Video Games ____Computer Games

7. How many games do you rent per year?

____Video Games ____Computer Games

8. Approximately how much do you spend on electronic entertainment each year? $____

9. What are your favorite types of games?

(10=favorite, 1=least favorite)

Action____ Action/RPG____ Adventure____ Driving____
Fighting____ Platform____ Puzzle____ Simulation____
Sports____ Strategy____ RPG____

10. Where do you buy most of your games?

Dept. Store____ E. Boutique____ Babbages____
Software Etc.____ Toys R Us____ Sears____
Toy Store____ Mail Order____ Other____

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Software Store____ Grocery/Drug Store____
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12. How much time do you spend with each issue?____Hrs.

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14. Do you plan to buy the next issue? Yes____ No____

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16. Which other video game publications do you read?

Name:________

17. My household income: (check closest answer/optional)

$20,000-$30,000____ $30,000-$50,000____
$50,000-$70,000____ $70,000-over____

18. What other activities do you enjoy?

Music____ Sports____
Movies____ Internet____
Other____

Send completed Survey to: Reader Survey 5137 Clareton Drive, Suite 210, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 all entries must be received by August 31, 1997. For a complete list of rules and details send self addressed envelope to the address above. Void where prohibited by law.





RESIDENT EVIL

SURVIVAL HORROR COMES TO SATURN...

Resident Evil. For PlayStation owners, the mere mention of it sparks fond memories of perfect, precise gameplay, a hardcore story and excellent graphics. For Saturn owners, the name evokes Sony envy. Come on, Segaphiles; regardless of the higher better-games-to-worse-games ratio the Saturn enjoys, you know you want Resident Evil. You always have. You've wanted that tension... that feeling of never knowing what's around the next corner... you've craved that skilled B-movie acting... you've longed to smash zombie heads like so many overripe melons. And now, thanks to the might that is Capcom, you can. Or you will as soon as Summer.

In case you've... um... you've been living in a cave for the last year (you just have to love Nick Rox's unique writing!), the story of Resident Evil is this: It's July, 1998. A series of bizarre murders have been occurring in the Arclay mountains that surround little Raccoon City. The victims, to borrow Chris' dialogue from the intro, were apparently eaten. Raccoon's crack S.T.A.R.S. (Special Tactics And Rescue Squad) Team has traced the perpetrators to a seemingly abandoned mansion high in the mountains, and flies both their Alpha and Bravo teams in to investigate. When Bravo Team's helicopter crashes and the pilot of Alpha's is scared away, however, the members of S.T.A.R.S. are left to fend for themselves against legions of zombified dogs. Apparently, only four members (who change depending on which character you choose, Chris or Jill) make it in to the mansion alive, and











ZOMBIES! DOGS! SHARKS! BEASTS! RECKONIZE!!



saturn

playstation



it is here where the true nightmare begins...

Resident Evil's gameplay is all about survival: Sure, the engine and puzzle elements were borrowed from the Alone in the Dark series, but those games didn't have you constantly checking to see how many bullets you have remaining or watching your supplies like a hawk. In RE, you're totally screwed if you waste bullets or supplies early on. You can get into situations where there's literally no way to win, unless you break out madman skills and use only your knife and never get hit. However, must of us aren't madmen. It's this type of bleeding-edge gameplay (you can make no mistakes, especially if you're playing Chris) coupled with the luscious graphics that make Resident Evil so memorable.

Alas, the graphics. No, they're not as good as the PlayStation version. Why? The shadows aren't blue, hear?! Er... uh... sorry. Flashbacks. But seriously, they aren't as good. No gouraud shading, lighting or transparencies really take their toll. Hopefully, this aspect of the Saturn version will be improved on.

We'll have a review of Resident Evil Saturn soon... let's hope the rumors of new, Saturn-exclusive features prove to be true! NR



saturn

playstation



MUCH MORE RES.EV. COMING SOON!!



P PREVIEW	SEGA SATURN	DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	# OF PLAYERS - 1	NICK ROX
		PUBLISHER- CAPCOM	DIFFICULTY - CHALLENGING	
		FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER	











HERC'S ADVENTURES

Everyone has their own wish list of 8/16-bit games they'd love to see get a next-gen makeover. Personally, I would donate limbs to see 32-bit versions of Phantasy Star, Metroid, Bare Knuckle, a 2D Contra, a real Shinobi, Gunstar Heroes, Rolling Thunder and nearly all of Capcom's coin-ops, circa 1990. But hey, a 32-bit Zombie's Ate My Neighbors is a start...

That's right: Herc's Adventure is ZAMN3 in all but name only. It's by the same team, it has the same control and item system, the same gameplay, the same wacky sense of humor—it even has some of the same enemies (those Martians sure get around). Of course, that's not necessarily a bad thing. ZAMN was a great game, and Herc's Adventure retains all the twisted sensibilities that made ZAMN so much fun. Unfortunately, it also retains the look and feel of a16-bit game. Now, personally, I don't have a problem with that, but if you're the kind of gamer who lives for fancy graphics, then Herc's Adventure isn't exactly going to blow your skirt up.

To be fair, Herc's Adventure is more like a ZAMN RPG than a straight sequel. Instead of ZAMN's linear level structure, LucasArts have opted for one single giant world map (Ancient Greece), which never loads. As you journey further into the game you are called upon to perform various sub-quests, battle bosses and occasionally travel back and forth between locations. Admittedly there's a lot more action than a traditional RPG, but you still have to talk to NPCs, find keys, solve puzzles and build up your character's attributes. I don't know if I'd call it an RPG, but it's definitely got RPG trimmings.

For the record, I really enjoyed Herc's Adventure, and if you liked ZAMN or Ghoul Patrol, I think you will too. The pace may be a tad slow at times, and some of the enemies may be a little cheap (read annoying), but the characters are well animated, the music is excellent and game is overflowing with LucasArts' distinctive brand of humor. It's not what I was hoping for in a 32-bit ZAMN, but seeing as the chances of that game getting a true 32-bit sequel are so slim, I better be thankful for what I've got. K

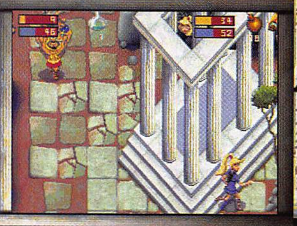
















R REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - LUCASARTS
- PUBLISHER - LUCASARTS
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - JUNE



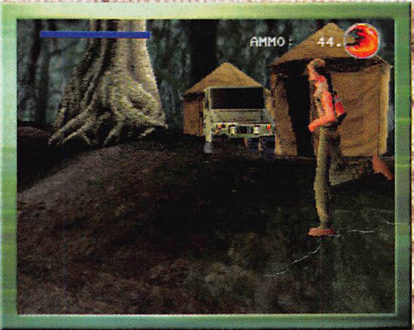
KNIGHTMARE
Zombies Ate My Neighbors - The RPG?!









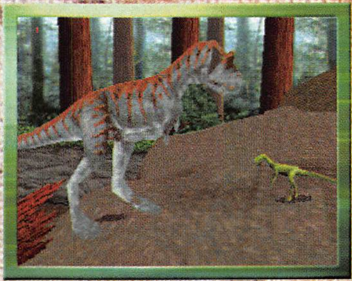




I'd swear that we've received about as many *Lost World* revs as there are Ronco products. They just seem to keep coming. Fortunately for us, this latest Saturn version is better than any spray-on hair or food dehydrator. Appaloosa, the folks who brought you the Saturn *Contra: Legacy Of War*, is handling this conversion of *The Lost World* for DreamWorks.

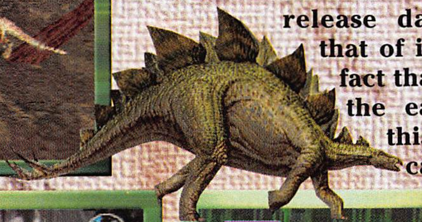
For anyone who's missed one of our numerous previews, *The Lost World* is a 2.5D action/platformer with the hook being the ability to play as a number of prehistoric beasties, from T-Rex to Compy. You are even allowed to play as humans, such as paleontologist Sarah Harding, though her polygonal model is nowhere near as cute as Julianne Moore.

Saturn *Lost World* has a planned release date later than that of its PS cousin, a fact that is evident by the early nature of this version. The camera system has yet to be fully implemented, many levels are incomplete, and the temp MIDI soundtrack is still in place. I am happy to report that the dinos already animate as smoothly as their PS counterparts and feature a smoother, more shaded appearance to boot. The texture quality is of lower resolution, but that really comes as no surprise considering how PS to Saturn conversions usually go.





Appaloosa's Saturn *Contra: LOW* actually ran a hair faster than the PS one, so I doubt they'll have any trouble making a great Saturn version of *Lost World*. What remains to be seen is how good of a game it actually turns out to be in the end. As with all things, only time will tell, and GameFan will be there. ***SD***





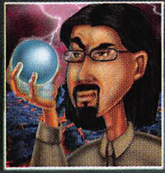


THE LOST WORLD JURASSIC PARK™

DreamWorks Interactive

PREVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - APPALOOSA/DWI	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - SEGA/DREAMWORKS	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER '97



SUBSTANCE D
Boy, it's risky making a Lost World game. Seriously, who saw that movie?









The *Shining* series proudly lives on in the US! *Shining the Holy Ark* is the seventh *Shining* game to make it to these shores, joining *Shining Force I, II, CD, Sword of Haja, Shining Wisdom*, and of course (drum roll...) *Shining in the Darkness, Holy Ark's* natural predecessor. That's almost every game in the series! In the US! The folks responsible for this year's *Shining* installment are Sonic Software Planning, one of SOJ's most respected in-house developers and the design team behind *Shining Force 2, SFCD*, and last year's *Shining Wisdom*. With *Shining the Holy Ark*, they've once again saved the day and quenched the thirst of RPG starved Saturn gamers in the US.

One look at *SHA* and real fans will recognize the tell-tale signs of a *Shining* game. Whether it's the text boxes, the italic lettering, or the menu system (complete with cute animating icons), if you've played a *Shining* game, you've been here before. It's a perfect menu system! You'll navigate through battle, magic, and character stats with ease, and every item is represented by a detailed image which scales in and out when selected. Sonic is to be commended for staying true to their roots.







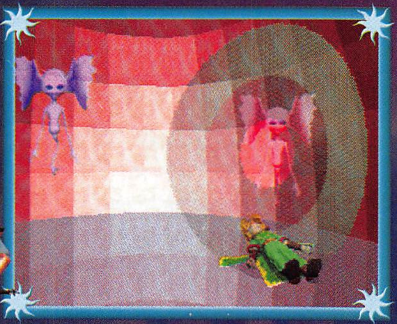




RENDERED POWER!

The first time I saw the characters in motion I was a little shocked. "Rendered?" I said. "No, it can't be!" This is the pseudo-sequel to ***Shining in the Darkness***, one of the greatest 16-bit games ever, the proud bearer of gorgeous hand-drawn characters... and you give me renders?! Well (sigh...), I'm cool with that. Sonic did it right, as you can see. These five clips are directly from the game. Each looks and acts very much like their hand-drawn forefathers, and the animation quality is often shocking. So who am I to complain?











OK, enough *Shining* nostalgia, let's get into the game. I've amassed a stockpile of info and opinions, and it all starts with gameplay. First, the basic stuff. *Shining the Holy Ark* is a first-person RPG set in a fantasy realm. You move (via a beautiful overhead map) from point to point, whether it be a forest, dungeon, or town, and click to enter the 3D environments. Once inside these first-person landscapes, you may bring up the menu windows, search, and take advantage of a couple of excellent features, the first of which is the required automapping screen. *SHA* is 100% first-person exploration, so an instant map (press Start, bingo) is very handy, especially when you're six floors deep in a mammoth underground labyrinth. Next are the convenient Look buttons. Pressing X looks left and right, Y looks up and down, and Z centers, so environments can be viewed from all angles. I would've preferred full d-pad control over the Look camera, like a corridor game, but what's here works fine.

REVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SONIC SOFTWARE PLANNING	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - JULY



GLITCH
A rendered *Shining* game... and it's awesome.

LIVE BY THE SWORD...

Let your foes taste the fury of tempered steel! Swords, axes, staffs, and ninja blades are within your grasp, available at your local weaponsmith, or simply find some mithril ore and have special weapons custom built at the forge! *Shining in the Darkness*, anyone? On the other hand, it might be YOU accepting a wicked claw, tentacle, or bite from one of *Holy Ark*'s countless forsaken creatures. Oh, well, everyone's gotta go sometime...







...DIE BY THE SPELL!

Call upon sorcery to destroy the enemy! Spectacular spells are commonplace in today's 32-bit RPGs, and *SHA* competes with the best. Complementing the assortment of fire storms, ice showers, and ninja magic are the elemental spells. Once cast, the screen fills with light and color as the element of choice rains its power down upon your foes! Great chunks of HP burn up in the wake of this awesome display!



CLASSIC FIRST-PERSON RPG FIGHTING, DECKED OUT IN A SEXY SET OF 32-BIT THREADS!



Shining the Holy Ark

So what about the translation, graphics, and sound? Well, SOA has done a competent, yet slightly mundane English translation. Every character you play or meet offers a unique personality, despite the sometimes generic text that comes along with them. What's funny, though, is the minor censoring. For example: At the local pub there's a character that buys "milk" for her grandmother because "the milk helps her to sleep at night." Milk? Riiight. Another chap in the bar raises his head from the table and says, "Burp. Drank that root beer too fast." Hee hee, must've been that new-fangled 'KA' brand root beer. As far as the main graphics go, the polygonal engine handles large environments (like towns, forests, etc.) very nicely, with almost no trace of pop-up whatsoever. The frame rate is low—in the range of 15 to 20—but it's perfectly functional, and the sprite-based objects and effects (trees, shrubs, spells) are lush and vivid, thanks to Sonic's unique artistic style. My only complaint? In busy environments the 3D engine is often stretched to its limits, and the resulting slow-down can be a little distracting, bogging down the menu windows and Look functions. And finally, a word about the music: Excellent. Great battle tunes and fantastic exploration tunes, perfectly suited to each area. I'll probably get the soundtrack.

There's still much more to talk about, but I'll leave the rest up to you. *Shining the Holy Ark* is the 32-bit update that *Shining in the Darkness* fans NEED, and a game that every RPG player should consider an essential purchase. G

PIXIE MAGIC!

Send these little magical beings into the fray! Be sure to search every corner of the world for Pixies who appear and join your party. There are dozens of Pixies, Fairies, Succubus, Incubus, and powerful Leprechauns. The more you find, the stronger each race of Pixie will get, so keep an eye out! They might just turn the tide of battle in your favor!

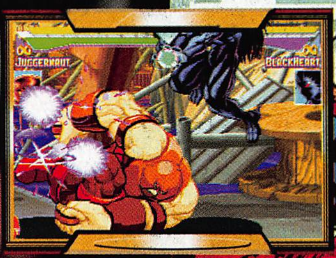




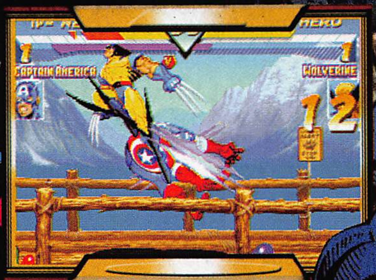


















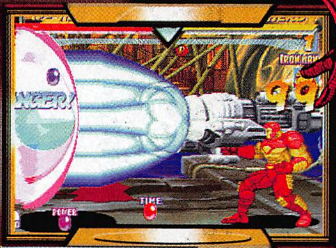
The first thing you need to know about Saturn *MSH* is that it uses the SNK RAM cartridge. In fact, this preview beta wouldn't run without it! Although the RAM cart will be optional in the final version, it's good to know that Capcom are continuing to support this essential peripheral. Especially when you see how amazing *MSH* looks with it!

MSH is probably Capcom's most graphically intensive CPS2 coin-op to date. The animation on characters like Shuma Gorath and Blackheart is unprecedented in a 2D fighting game, with the possible exception of *SF3*. It was always going to be difficult cramming that many frames into the limited RAM of the home consoles, and indeed, the PS preview version we saw last month suffered badly from lack of animation. But, thankfully, the Saturn version is a whole new ball game...

Saturn *MSH* is currently around 70% complete. All of the characters are playable, all the backgrounds are in, and the Infinity Gem system is working. There's no CPU AI at present, and the game runs pretty slowly (slower than the PS version) but both these flaws should be remedied by the time the game ships.

What is apparent from this version, however, are the quality of the graphics. Even the splendor of *Cyberbots* could not prepare me for the 2D explosion that is *MSH*—the animation is truly shocking. Admittedly it's not arcade perfect, but it's pretty damn close. The frame loss is no where near as bad as *X-Men: COTA*, and you'd have to have the two versions running side by side to notice any major differences. Of course, that's *with* the RAM cart. Sega still doesn't have any plans to release it over here (although Capcom says they've asked), and we've yet to see how *MSH* looks without it. Rest assured, we'll keep you posted. K











P PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

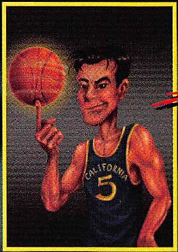
- DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
- PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
- AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



KNIGHTMARE
Shaping up to be 'Marvel'ous!

MARVEL SUPER HEROES

GAMEFAN Sports



JOE KIDD

KIDD'S CORNER

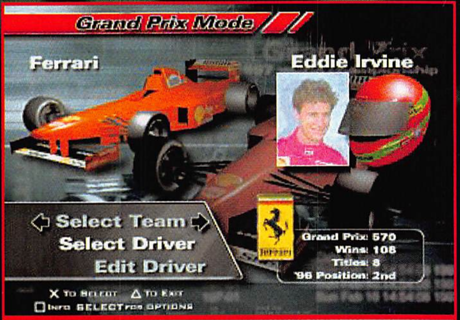
WHO Plays SPORTS games, anyway?

Who exactly are the ones that are playing Madden and Shootout across this great nation of ours? I mean these guys (and gals) comprise at least 30% of video game sales each year, so they're spending some serious bucks, cuz these games as you know aren't cheap! Did you know that a football game, primarily Madden of course, has dominated the PlayStation game sales for both years of the Sony PlayStation's existence? Keep in mind that Sony did over $1 billion in PlayStation sales in less than a year—even more amazing is that those figures were calculated even before the Holiday season! Who's buying these games? Let's see, I gotta assume that college-minded, and college-aged males are the biggest percentage of these consumers, followed by the yuppies with the PSL's, then I guess we'd have to go back down to the high school ranks, followed by the numbers of professional athletes that game it up on the road, then maybe all the mothers that buy them for their kids, because sports are a healthy alternative to having their little ones get broken on the football field. What do all of these groups have in common that would clump them all this category though, because it is quite a vast array... Of course, you have to take into consideration that all of these groups just flat out love sports; the camaraderie, the challenge, the competition, the rivalries, the traditions, the stats, the players, the cheerleaders, the mascots, the uniforms, the arenas, the excitement, the interaction, and you know what else? Sporting events are social. That's one of the best things about sports—you don't go at it alone, whether in the stands or part of the team, or just you and the coach. We're talking friendships bonded through wind-sprints, deals done on the 9th hole, field trips to the Yankees game, girlfriends met at Super Bowl parties, family reunion picnics with the traditional football game, playin' hoops with Dad over the garage, or bowling with your buddies on Tuesday and playing co-ed softball on Thursday nights. We even give scholarships to athletes who happen to excel at their, that's right... their Sport!

So what does this all have to do with sports video games? All I can figure is that we're just such a doggone sports-oriented society; these cultural events and icons are something we want to re-live over and over again, and in every form imaginable. We love the fact that we can play these games with seven other sports nuts simultaneously, and that Rodman has different color hair in each game. It's just plain simple: Sports are social and they're cool, too. Yeah, we like our occasional RPG or a fighter here and there, but man I gotta get out in the sunshine, too! Don't keep me in the dark too long playing SF or Res Evil, I don't like closing my eyes and seeing the dungeon walls of the RPG I've been playing for the last 23 hours... (when will that music ever stop!) I'll take a good hoops game any day of the week.

Joe Kidd can be reached for questions or comments at:
rlee@metropolismedia.com

FORMULA 1 '97 BY PSYGNOSIS









Remember that great racing game by Psygnosis last year? That one that sold over a million copies worldwide? Well the new season is here and we're all set to step into the newest saga of Psygnosis' *Formula 1* series, 1997 edition. Bizarre Creations developed this title and has tried to give racing fans the ultimate in racing realism and excitement, which brings about a unique balance of simcade action. *F1* includes all of the drivers from the 1997 season, has 17 circuits, new authentic tracks like Silverstone (UK), Monaco (Monte Carlo), and Adelaide (Australia). This international tour will send chilling sensations up your spine like the race car drivers feel in the cockpit and on the track. You'll be able to select from a variety of viewpoints as well as weather conditions, manual or automatic transmission. Take advantage of all of the high impact sound effects with a Dolby Surround Sound option, while being guided by veteran race commentators, Murray Walker and John Watson. Get ready for some rubber bending AI, and precision play control with this 1997 3rd quarter release.

"JOE" VIEWPOINTS "STRAP"

"JOE"

Soccer was never so kickin' until this title dribbled into town. The last time I thought I had played a winner, was playing *FIFA* for the N64; it was to me the best soccer game to date. 2 months later I see the error of my ways, alas, my eyes have been open—a new champion has climbed atop of the mountain, and that game is *ISS Soccer* by Konami. Play it once and you'll know why this is a must title for all N64 owners and sports gamers everywhere. Take advantage of the Practice Mode, because there will be plenty of owners vying for the Cup.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	10	8	9	95



INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER
KONAMI
SONY PLAYSTATION

"STRAP"

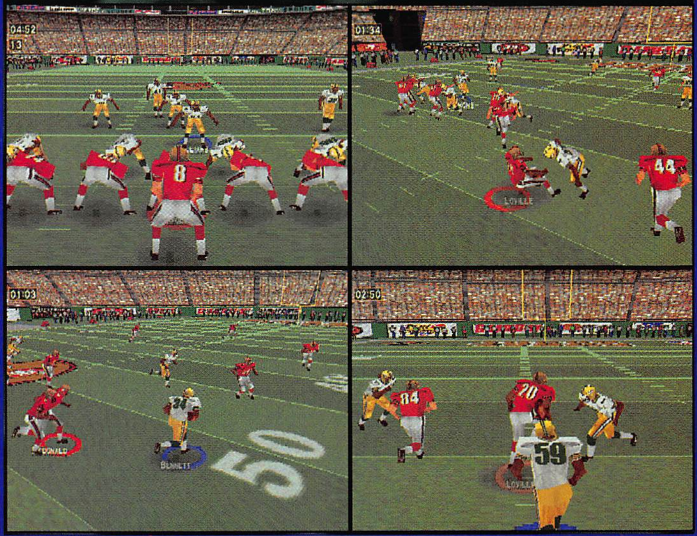
Let me set the 64-bit record straight: *ISS* positively destroys *FIFA* in every conceivable way, from top to bottom. The graphics are clearly superior, the sound is better, and the cool analog controls absolutely take a crap on *FIFA*'s stiff, lame excuse for gameplay. Am I being too harsh? Nah, it's been an off year for *FIFA*, even on the '64, and people only ever buy one soccer game...so make it this one, please?

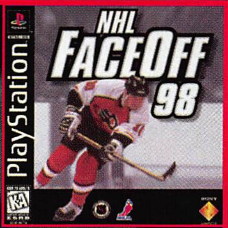
G	C	P	M	O	
9	10	10	9	9	97



Just as Green Bay snuck up on Dallas and San Fran, so has *GameDay* moved in on *Madden*. The response for *GameDay* was overwhelmingly positive, and the anticipation for *GameDay '98* has been large ever since, and has even sustained the #1 position of best selling title on the PlayStation. *GD'98* will be a true 3D, fully polygonal football game, in fact everything in the game is polygonal; new stadiums, sideline crews, coaches, camera men and the players too. Last year's *GD* really captured football fans everywhere because of the realism of its advanced AI, more realistic than any other football title (including *Madden)*, and defensive stunts never done before. Now with the addition of fully polygonal graphics, the combination should be lethal, assuming nothing in gameplay has been lost.

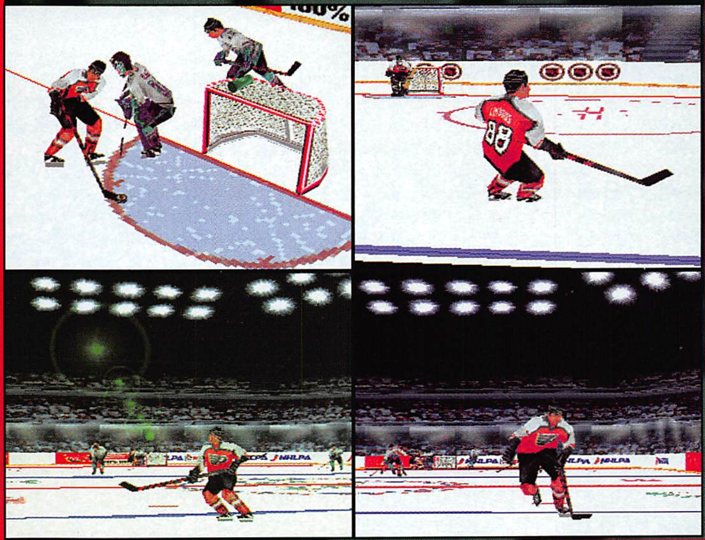
All 30 NFL teams and over 1500 real players are available. All of the team and player attributes will reflect their real life "counterparts." A new mode that's finding more and more popularity in football games, is the Draft Mode. In *GD'98*'s version you'll get a shot at drafting from the top 6 players from each NFL team, in the traditional NFL draft style. Over 500 plays in your playbook, an infinite number of camera angles, and category upon category of statistical tracking. Sony's going long with this September release.





It seems the majority of Sony sports games have the book on creating games with realistic AI and combining that with terrific gameplay. You'll be happy to know that they aren't satisfied, but are making massive improvements on top of their already popular games. *NHL Face Off* gained its popularity by focusing on elements of the game, things like team strategy and gameplay, i.e. icon passing. The new direction *NHL'98* is taking will not only enhance the existing, successful qualities of the game, but will make a huge stab at perfecting the graphics via polygonal players and atmosphere. The challenge will come not only in making these polygonal players smooth to the eye, but also smooth to the touch.

All 26 NHL teams will be included, as well as all the players that comprise the teams. Sony has adopted the EA-ism of sports by doing everything real: real teams, strategies, players, attributes, arenas and sounds. New sound effects with new organ tunes, skating sounds, checking animations and fighting upgrades too. Keep all of your own individual user stats, and keep an eye on all of the league leaders throughout the season. Mike Carlucci, the Mighty Ducks' PA guy, will only add to the game's authenticity. You can play up to 8 players, and with the way hockey fanaticism is spreading, that should be very accommodating. *NHL'98* offers Exhibition, Practice, Season Mode or shoot straight for the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Strategy and AI is still at a premiere level, enabling you to select trapping or checking defenses, break out modes, fore-checking and more.





Racing fever is upon us, and Sony has jumped on the bandwagon. CART (Championship Auto Racing Teams), also known as Indy Car Racing, introduces teams like Penske, Team Rahal, and Newman-Haas to PlayStation users, both the teams and their drivers, like Paul Tracy, Al Unser Jr. and Michael Andretti; 20 teams and sponsors in all. The CART circuit consists of 17 exciting races, the point standing of which are posted at the conclusion of each race. You'll be able to choose from about a dozen tracks that are scaled to the actual courses, like Homestead, Long Beach, Rio de Janeiro and others. *CART WS* will feature 4 perspectives to race by: Road Cam, In Car Cam, First Person Removed and Helicopter View. In addition, you'll have 4 modes of play in: New Season, Continue Season, Single Race and Practice.

An emphasis has been put on physics and collision, as your cars are capable of being rolled, flipped and pushed. In event that you get "moved" around on the track, every part on your car can be independently damaged or removed. Modify your car in fuel, weight distribution, tire pressure and hardness, camber adjustment, front and rear fins as well as gear ratios—bust out the wrench! Beware of the slick surfaces caused by rain, they say the first 30 minutes of rain are the most dangerous... just went to Traffic School... Take advantage of stat-tracking over the season for average and best lap times, previous/current records and lap times.

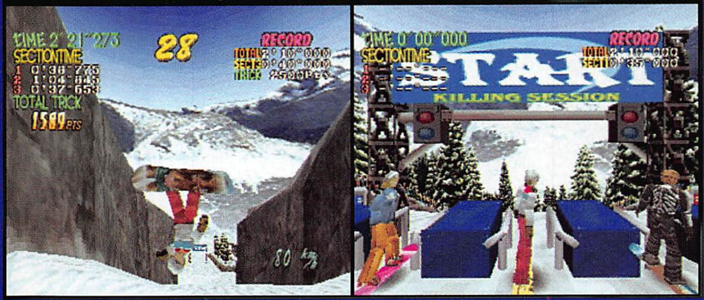
Well, it will be available in the Fall, so we'll tackle the most important aspects in the next issue: gameplay and control.



COOL BOARDERS 2

You always want to hope that a sequel will be an improvement over the first edition. *Cool Boarders 2* will have a bit of a challenge, as *CB* jumped to the top with its attempt at capturing the snowboarding experience. The main objective of UEP, *CB2*'s development team, was to add the competitive edge. After all, what's a sports game if you can't beat somebody into the ground?

You'll have 10 different snowboarders to choose from, each with a different set of attributes and ratings. In addition, you'll have over 12 different boards to choose from, and if you're feeling a little creative... design your own cool-dude board. It looks like selection will not be a problem, as you'll even have 16 all new downhill courses to risk your neck on, and if that's not enough you'll be introduced to the new Half Pipe and Slalom courses. Graphics are constructed via a full 3D Gaming Engine that produces polygonal characters and tracks, in a 2D perspective. All of your best moves will be captured accurately, which is a good thing since 40 new maneuvers have been added, moves like "Caballerial Tweaks" and "720 Indy Nosebones." The final aspect that should really put it all together is the sound track, a medley of 8 different, skull reverberating tracks. Look for this title in November.



EA Busts Open the Tailgate Party!






NCAA FOOTBALL 98

What red blooded American can say they can't get into the spirit of college football? Oh, the tailgate parties, the marching bands, the Rose Parades, the Orange Bowls, and the Christmas trees... well, we can all do without the Christmas trees. For those of you that can identify with me (of course that means anyone with any common sense and an ability to appreciate the very essence of collegiate life), you have a game in NCAA Football '98 that will spring up country-wide rivalries right in your very own living room... or dorm room for that matter. EA has gotten together with Coach Terry Donahue, and has written up a script worthy of the NCAA Football name itself. 20 great bowl match-ups, with exclusives on the Rose Bowl, Orange Bowl, Sugar and Fiesta. Scout next week's match-up and learn about the opponent's key plays and players. Keep an eye on the CNN/USA Today Coach's Poll of the Top 25 teams in the nation as your team climbs to the top, or merely gets honorable mention. Whether your team's the Fighting Irish, the Canes of Miami, or yes, the mighty Golden Bears of California, your playbook will resemble the actual team's in real life; for better or worse in some cases. For all of you armchair coaches and ADs, take the experience one step further as you go out and recruit your players for next year in hopes of creating a dynasty over the next few seasons. We don't want to forget all of the NFL-bound seniors, so they will have an opportunity to showcase their talents in the East/West Shrine game in Palo Alto. Wherever your colors lie, you'll get a shot at 'em, so pull up those knee highs and get ready for next month's review.



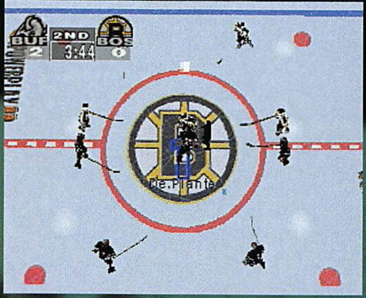


NHL POWERPLAY '98

... always looking for the upper hand







WHENever I'm talking about the "best" hockey games, with WHOever I'm talking with, the name *Powerplay* comes up as one of the top 2 or 3—without fail. From the looks of how things are going over at Virgin, it looks as if history will repeat itself, and conversations of good hockey games will continue in the same direction as the recent past. Everyone is moving toward motion captured 3D animated players, and Virgin will not be left behind. These 3D characters will be implemented into both platforms, as well as the on-the-fly 3D environments. Player attribute realism hopes to be accurately portrayed in every position, but most importantly from the man guarding the net. Based on their actual abilities, they'll have to fight off the various attacks on goal, dump-in tries, fake shot attempts and slap shots from afar. Of course you'll have the now-standard-among-sports-games: stat-tracking, create, and trade players.

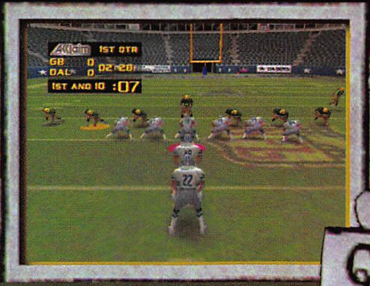


And now for... ... a little motion capture!







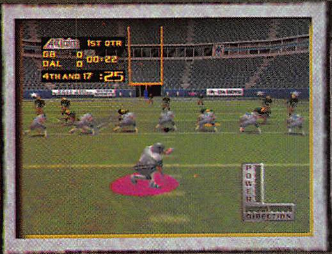
NFL Quarterback Club 98

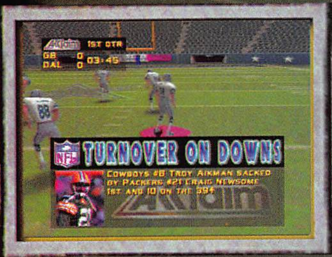
The kind of anticipation I've placed on *Quarterback Club '98* has been like eagerly awaiting this summer's blockbuster movie. However, if you're like me, you usually walk out of the theater with a stiff back feeling a bit let down. So I approach these cases with guarded optimism, but never before has a football game been made for the Nintendo 64... Can you imagine using a polygonal engine with motion-captured animations to recreate the glories of the gridiron? Well, I finally had a glimpse as to what all the hype was about, a preview into this Summer's N64 blockbuster by Acclaim, if you will.

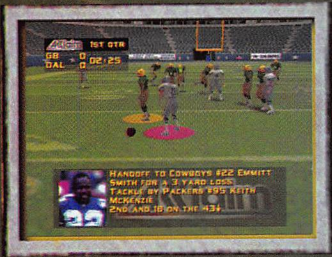
Whatever your opinions are of *QBC '97* for the PlayStation, will have to be cleansed from your palate, because *QBC* in '98 is all about 64. Knowing the complexities of the N64 and the 3D rendering process, the developers at Iguana knew they couldn't keep the game exactly the same as the PlayStation version, and just make everything 3D. Instead, they realized it had to be dug up from the root and re-developed accordingly. What you will find are some of the most definitive graphics and control you've ever had in any sports game; much of this due in part to N64's anti-aliasing and real-time rendering process.

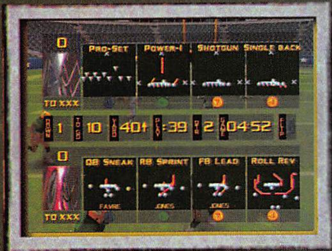
Don't forget that you'll be using the analog stick for this sports title, something we'll all have to get used to as sports fans. Somehow the analog seems to make it more of a finesse game, as you move away from the familiar D-pad, where pressing the cross harder makes you actually believe you'll go faster. Well, if you can't separate yourself from "Sega Thumb," you can still resort to the friendly D-pad confines. Another "feature," courtesy of the analog action, are 14 different buttons, and yes, they are all assigned a function. Well, I guess if Brett Favre has to memorize over 1000 plays, 14 buttons isn't too bad. To ease the mayhem of it all, *QBC '98* throws in a nice touch by having the ball-snap and passing windows come from the trigger underneath, so you don't have to confuse that with any of the other 13 options you've got running.

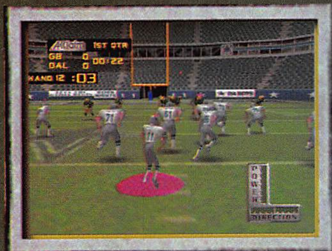
Here's the low down. All 30 NFL teams alongside 30 3D rendered stadiums, and over 1500 real players. Exclusive in-game profiles and game tips from the actual Quarterback Club QB's. You get complete roster moves like trading, creating players, creating new teams, fantasy GM-style drafting, signing and releasing. Play Script option lets you march down the field on your opening drive, by pre-determining and pre-programming your first set of plays. Bring in a little stat-tracking in some 9 categories, a little in-game player highlights, a couple color photos and NFL film footage, and a little stat-update action, and BAM! You got a football game.... sorry, a little too much essence. We'll stick this baby in the oven for a review in our next issue. JK





















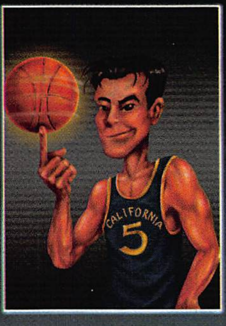
GAMEFAN SPORTS



PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64

- DEVELOPER - IGUANA
- PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-8
- DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
- AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



JOE KIDD
Brown this one a little more to let all the flavors come out...

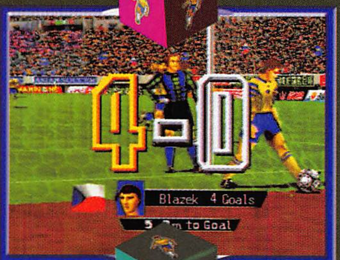




International Superstar Soccer 64

I've been feeling guilty for some time now, because we at GameFan sometimes get these great sports games, games I just can't say enough about. I tell you about how they are the best in existence, how much you would love them, and all the great new features but the only problem is that they never leave the foreign soils in which they are created—just a tease from overseas! You can certainly see why I'm so ridden with guilt.

Finally, I am redeemed! Konami has released their highly coveted *International Superstar Soccer 64*, for you, the neglected masses. If you read my review on the game previously known as *J-League Soccer*, you know how enamored I was with the game; a game certainly worthy rejoicing. To my satisfaction, English everywhere! I could now read the options, the camera angles, the strategies, and modes. Can you say stats? Several different clear charts of settings and figures to enable ideal play setting, as well as Create Player and Trades.


Choose from Exhibition, World League, International Cup, Shoot-Out, Scenario, or even Training modes. For those of you that are unfamiliar with the Scenario mode, it basically consists of placing you into game breaking situation, where your every move will determine the fate of the game. We all know it's the "playmakers" that make the big bucks—is that you? The Practice mode is something that has been prevalent in Japanese sports games for some time, and is starting to appear more and more in "non-Japanese" sports games as well. Undergo the rigors of perfecting your goal kick... kick, after kick, after kick... Larry Bird shot 100 free throws a day after practice... As you can see *ISS 64* offers one of the most comprehensive list of modes provided by any soccer game, complemented by an equally balanced arsenal of options, strategies, offensive attacks, and defensive controls. For instance, on offense, you have 20 different options you can choose from; from Search Passes and Feints (dummy kicks) to Quick Turns and Step-Overs. The multi-faceted N64 analog pad equips you with an array of attacks that outdoes the Italian and Brazilian International teams combined!

Get ready for some of the best control and gameplay to be found in any sports game. Yes, you do have to familiarize yourself with the analog stick, that is if you haven't already. I found the maneuverability of the stick to be particularly useful in soccer, since you're constantly making back cuts, side passes, etc. One of the nice things about the game is that even if you don't know too much about soccer, you can still get by with using only a couple buttons, but for the true strategist, you'll love the ability to manipulate all the different functions.

As in any sport, defense wins the game. You have 5 different control options as the user: Charging, Shoulder Charging, Sliding, Dash or Body Contact. Some of these may result in fouls, but if you come in at the right angle, you might get away with one. The goalkeeper can be switched onto Automatic or Semi-Automatic control. Included in the goalie's actions are: Saving, Movement after the Catch, Dropping the Ball, Punt Kick, Goal Kick, Overhand Throw, and Underhand Throw. Unlike other soccer games, which have many, yet indistinguishable moves, *ISS 64*'s moves and controls are each extremely identifiable, and take place on command. The combination of total control gameplay, complete selection of options and strategic attacks, as well as realistic graphics and sound, make this game a true soccer experience.

JK

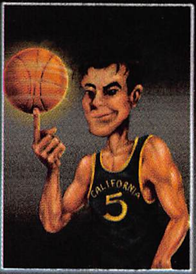
GAMEFAN SPORTS



REVIEW

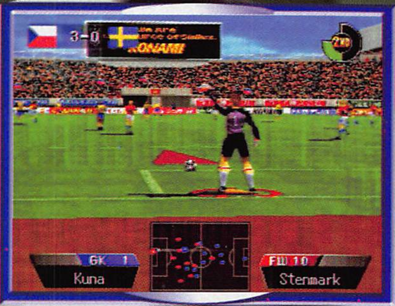
NINTENDO 64

- DEVELOPER - KONAMI
- PUBLISHER - KONAMI
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-4
- DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
- AVAILABLE - JULY



JOE KIDD
WARNING!
May cause foot fetish.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD!

NHL BREAKAWAY '98











You know, I still don't understand that whole octopus chucking thing, but I'm certainly glad the National Sushi Federation stood up to the squid tossers, and put an end to it all... complete blasphemy if you ask me, wasting all them good eats. One thing I do understand though is some serious video hockey. NHL Breakaway '98 could be the game we've all been waiting for, one that appeases across the board, from the fight-freaks to the puck purists, this title looks like it has a little of everything.

Tangent: Why is it that many of the poorer sports games have a better skating feel than a lot of hockey games? Isn't that weird? I mean you can't get your basketball player to run, he just slides around the court, while some of these hockey games you'd think you were doing the triple jump with all the choppiness... hmmmmmm.

Anyway, Breakaway '98 is not one of those games... bad ones that is. This hi-res sim has down-to-the-detail playbook-based AI, which not only reacts to your (the user's) actions, but also sets up real plays from the actual teams. Acclaim boasts that the polygonal 3D graphics are so clean and sharp you can read the players' numbers on their sleeves! Not only that, but they also had their own state-of-the-art motion capturing studio built, producing the highest quality animations on the market.

The true hockey enthusiast will be breathless with all of the new features. The momentum-based checking system calculates each player's weight and velocity, thus hurling them into proportionately measured body slams. And since there are variable player sizes (displayed graphically as well), the depicted checking animations are fierce. Ever try Icon Passing? Well if you haven't you will soon. It's the latest in on-the-fly passing, and it's never been used in a hockey game until now. What you'll find is pin-point passes, and a better ability to manipulate the break-away. As the season progresses, and your players and coaches get more experience, the Total Team Management feature will allow you to accumulate points and improve, ala RPGs. Ever wish you could see the player's name on his jersey after you've created him? Got it. Want to control teammates even if they aren't controlling the puck? Got it. You go Acclaim, win one back for the good ole NSF. ***JK***



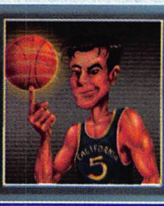






GAMEFAN SPORTS — P PREVIEW — PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ACCLAIM
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-8
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - AUGUST



JOE KIDD
Fighting Engine? Cool.





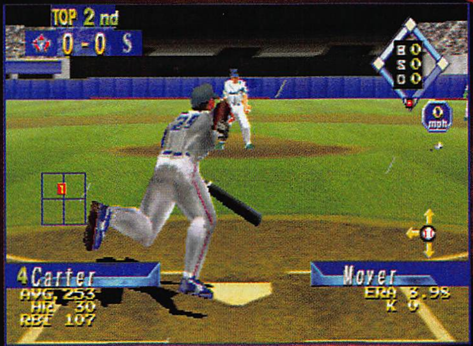


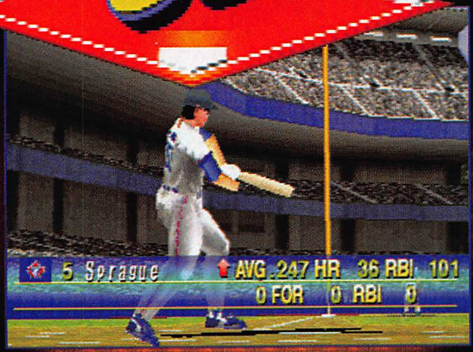

World Series Baseball '98

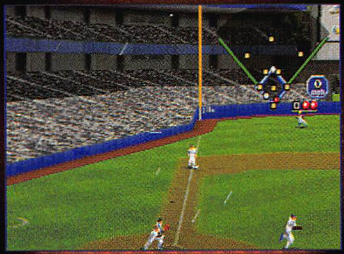
The brightest star in the Sega Sports line-up has always been its *World Series Baseball.* From the inaugural days on the Genesis to its emergence on the Saturn, *WSB* has challenged as the best baseball game on the market, time and time again. Recently, however, Sega Sports has fallen into a slumber, putting out little of quality, as well as quantity. Perish the thought of it having an affect on the king of Saturn sports titles.

You can allay all fears that you may have, because Sega Sports is back—with a vengeance. Complete with a new and improved corporate strategy, Sega Sports positions itself to reassert its dominance in the Saturn sports realm. The title that will announce this reemergence will be *World Series Baseball '98.*













Following suit to the competition, *WSB'98* will make the switch over from sprites to polygons. Some may cringe at such a thought, considering that the former, two versions looked beautiful, but the changeover was inevitable; it's evolution. While still too early to compliment or condemn the look of the polygon players, it is definite that *WSB'98* will suffer from the same awkwardness as all of the new, 3D titles; players look a tad unusual, and there are some problems with polygon break-up.

You can expect the same colorful and energetic commentary, as well as some lively crowd noise. Don't expect there to be too much deterioration in playability, either. *WSB* still features some of the best in the genre, with little difficulty arising from the introduction of the 3D motion capture.

There will be a smattering of new additions to this year's title, one of which is the inclusion of a batter/pitcher box. This box sits outside of the regular batter's box and displays the batter's strengths and weaknesses, ie.: if he is a good low ball hitter, the two lower quadrants will highlight red; if he can't hit inside pitches, the inside quadrants will light blue. The box will also display the locations of where the pitcher has been throwing, alerting you to any patterns, as well as showing you which pitches have been hit. A very helpful item.

Overall, *WSB'98* looks as though it will remain the crown jewel of Sega Sports. The perfect blend of fast, arcade action and meat-and-potatoes simulation, *WSB'98* is sure to satisfy. ***JS***

GAMEFAN SPORTS



PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SEGA

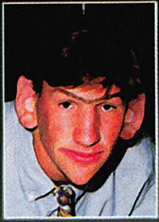
PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SUMMER



THE ROOKIE
The perfect blend of fast, arcade action and meat-and-potatoes simulation.



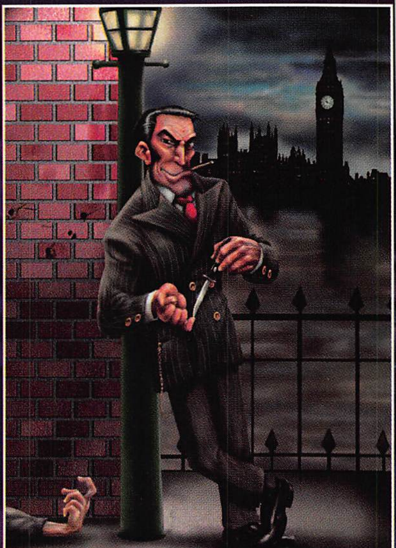




The Guvnor presents...

EUROPA

Strike a bleedin' light and knock me down wiv a fevver if I'm not back with the toppermost info from the UK and beyond! Lawks a lordy!



Wotcha me old cockers, it's the Guvnor 'ere, innit? Back with another tea drinking, scone eating, soccer playing edition of everyone's favorite euro-gaming column: Europa!

NINTENDO STRUGGLES, SONY DOMINATES... ...AND SATURN GOES UNDER!

The recent launch of the N64 in the UK went well... but not as well as Nintendo would have liked. Even though the initial shipment of units sold out, subsequent shipments have been selling slowly, prompting a 40% price drop from £250 ($400) to £150 ($240) after only eight weeks. This was a measure that severely pissed off nearly all pre-existing N64 owners who bought the machine at full price! Cripes!

On the other hand, Sony's PS price drop to £129 ($200) insured that their machines' sales skyrocketed. After the drop the only way you could pick up a PS was to pre-order—there were no PlayStations on store shelves anywhere for well over a week!

Finally, Sega seems to be taking a turn for the worse, with sales of the Saturn reaching an all-time low. Really, if you were to see hardware and software sales figures for the Saturn in the UK, you'd cry. We're talking 1000s vs 100s for software and 100s vs 10s for hardware. Sega recently dropped the price of the Saturn from £179 ($286) with two games to £99 ($160) solus or £129 ($200) with any game. Rumor has it that Sega of Japan did NOT instigate this move... In related news, Sega UK's #2 big cheese, European Marketing Director Andy Mee, was recently fired. Bummer.

NEW DMA TITLE REVEALED: SILICON VALLEY FOR N64

This N64 platform/strategy game has a simple visual style similar to *Mario 64*, though the gameplay is completely different. The scene is aboard space station 'Silicon Valley,' and you control a variety of Nanobots to solve the mystery of Silicon Valley's 1000 year disappearance. A Nanobot is defined by DMA as a cyborg animal, very similar to those found on Earth—with a few custom extras: Foxes have optional rocket propulsion, dogs may switch between paws or wheels, and so on. Nanobots need to be 'possessed' by a micro chip before falling under your command, and can only be 'entered' if they are close to exhaustion. The idea is to switch between N-bots in order to accomplish specific tasks in areas of Silicon Valley. Each time you do, a snippet of Silicon Valley history is revealed. Weird and fun (hopefully). Not due out for ages (it's about 40% complete) but looking good.

TOMB RAIDER 2 UPDATE & BAD NEWS FOR SATURN OWNERS!

Despite the news that the Saturn version of *Tomb Raider 2* (originally specified to use the rumored *VF3* upgrade cartridge) has been canned, work continues on the PS and PC versions. The game engine for *TR2* is a modified version of the original, and everything is being handled by the same team (or what's left of them). Lara is being remodeled to be more curvaceous (she's, er, 'rounder' than before), and now sports a cool pony tail. While we're on the subject, a new gameplay feature includes Lara's pony tail catching fire in a Michael Jackson-tastic manner! There's also a variety of costumes required for specific situations, such as scuba diving, mountain climbing, and so on. Lara has a couple of new abilities to help her reach awkward places: hand-over-hand climbing to scale walls, and crawling beneath ledges. Also expect to see cool vehicles in use for new types of terrain, such as a Skidoo on snow. Though combat is still long-range (no hand-to-hand combat) there are a couple of new weapons planned to add variety. The harpoon is the only one mentioned so far.

Core aims to add more ambient atmosphere with new lighting techniques, a good example being the flares which Lara can either carry or throw to illuminate dark passageways. One idea under discussion is the possibility of night and day, which would add to the puzzle solving element. All new outdoor locations would take advantage of this. It is also rumored that there may be more than one playable character (another explorer perhaps) which would indicate some form of multi-player mode—think of the possibilities! All in all, *TR2* looks destined to be more action packed and viscerally challenging than the original.

WIPEOUT XL SATURN

While developers like Core and Shiny continue to abandon the Saturn, it's nice to know that Psygnosis is continuing to support Sega's dark horse. Their latest is a conversion of the PS smash hit, *Wipeout XL*. We've seen the game moving and are happy to report that it's looking jolly tasty indeed. Using a modified *Manx TT* engine, the game runs at 30fps with little clipping and all the gameplay features that made the PS version so special. There are still no transparencies, but when the gameplay is 100%, who cares?!





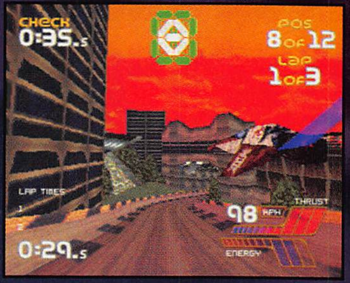
WIPEOUT XL ON SATURN!















Right: Flippin' heck! Just look at those WipeOut XL shots! Not bad!

DEEP SEA ADVENTURE





EXPLORE SUNKEN CITIES FILLED WITH HIDDEN TREASURES!





PlayStation
Developer: Takara
Publisher: Takara
Released: Now

A strange tale... "Mother Earth was being devastated by the people it had created. In desperation the land called out to the sea who summoned the Great Sea God to punish mankind. The God called forth the waters of the World to submerge the land and now almost all of the great cities and civilizations lie in the darkest depths of the ocean. The sunken ruins are a dangerous and mysterious place.

"Whilst searching for these mysteries a brave adventurer vanishes without a trace beneath the sea. His son Chris vows to find him, and sets forth on a journey to the sea bottom."

In order to search for him you must investigate the aim of his research and using your submarine dive deep into the ocean to search for clues. In the sea there are many ancient artifacts and treasures, etc. You must retrieve these, exchange them for cash and then purchase items with which you can upgrade your submarine.

The game is an action/adventure with two distinct modes. Before you can explore the ocean you must prep your submarine, stocking up on essential components like torpedoes and power cells, and then talk to the locals for clues. Wandering through small towns and shops in traditional RPG fashion with overhead maps is nothing new, but the 2D graphics here are



pretty poor, more akin to early SNES games. Playing through these areas is made worse by the accompaniment of truly awful music. You WILL turn this off after a few minutes, I guarantee it!

Luckily, when you finally get into the submarine for some aquatic action things improve greatly. Huge underwater caverns, caves, volcanoes, sunken cities are all brought to life with plenty of 3D polygon jiggery-pokery. Not the most detailed environments and warping/glitching is commonplace, but each area has its own unique atmosphere with some subtle, soothing soundtracks. The submarine has many functions yet the control is very simple. It may seem sluggish at first but once you have upgraded to a sleeker model expect a sharp rise in performance.

Each area has its own look along with a specific task at hand. One stage has you searching a sunken city complete with skyscrapers, another has you creeping through a volcano looking for a pirate vessel! The only downside here is the lack of pace. The game focuses too hard on the search aspect with long trawls across the sea floor looking for microscopic treasure chests. Battles with enemy subs and sea monsters are thrilling stuff when encountered, they just occur too rarely.

Overall, Deep Sea Adventure is an fairly enjoyable game from Takara. The intriguing storyline, massive amounts of glorious CG and involving gameplay are well executed. If the 2D areas weren't so appalling, Deep Sea Adventure would probably merit your attention. Unfortunately, with RPGs so thin on the ground, it just lacks the essential ingredients that could have made it successful against the ever expanding lineup of underwater action games that are heading our way.

SELL THE TREASURE AND UPGRADE YOUR SUBMARINE!









AN ACTION ADVENTURE DEEP UNDER THE OCEAN!

•JAPAN NOW SPECIAL REPORT•PART 2
TOKYO**GAME**SHOW

GAMEFAN RETURNS TO THE GAME SHOW ONCE MORE TO UNCOVER SEGA'S PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD. YOU CAN DISCOVER THE NEW TITLES FROM SEGA, THE GD NET CREW AND A WEALTH OF HEARTY, THIRD-PARTY SMASH SATURN PRODUCE BY SIMPLY READING THE FOLLOWING TWO PAGES. SIMPLE EH!

• TOKYO**GAME**SHOW • SEGA

PROJECT SONIC/SONIC JAM • SEGA TOURING CAR • AZEL PANZER DRAGOON RPG • LAST BRONX • TACTICS FORMULA ONE

Despite their rather modestly sized stand, Sega had the busiest booth at the show, with a constant stream of live announcements on stage from the game developers themselves. Throughout the day, the Japanese press were camped at the base of the stage, just waiting for the next event (there was one every 30 minutes!).

Undoubtedly the biggest announcement at the show was *Project Sonic*. Mr. Yuji Naka was there to explain about *Sonic Jam* and officially launch the whole project. He did, however, remain tight lipped as to what the Sonic Team were up to at the moment.

Despite having only just started conversion, Sega was eager to announce *Sega Touring Car Championship* for the Saturn. As it's only 5% complete, we were only treated to arcade video footage, and there was no firm word on Saturn-specific features.

Very popular at the show but



MR. YUJI NAKA TALKS ABOUT HIS NEW PROJECT SONIC GAME.

not yet playable was *Azel Panzer Dragoon RPG*. A spokesperson from Team Andromeda was on stage to explain the current development status and reveal some of the features that will be in the game. And yet, although they answered many of the questions people had on the game, they created as many mysteries concerning aspects of the game still not revealed. The booth video display clearly showed the nature of the battle sequences, which the programmers are currently working on, and depicted town stages through which your character could walk.

The most eagerly awaited game at the show was *Last Bronx*. On stage, they showed a specially created live action video of the characters fighting. The 30% complete game was playable at the show, and Sega had several talk shows with the development team. It appears that they may not wish to add any new characters to the Saturn version in fear of spoiling its unique arcade image.

Reflecting the wide variety of game genres Sega is trying to promote, *Culdcept*, a fantasy simulation game based on the currently fashionable trading card board-game system, was an unexpected addition to Sega's lineup.

Another surprise announcement was that of *Tactics Formula One*. Despite the similarities of its name, it has no relation to any arcade game, and is in fact a strategic "board game" like racing game. TFO allows you to race not by sitting behind the steering wheel but by configuring every aspect of the your car and driver and then watch the results instead.



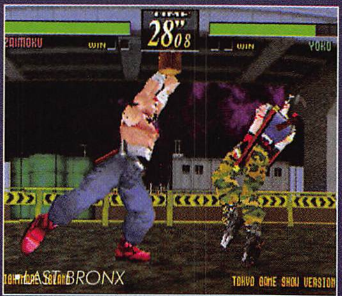
LAST BRONX WAS THE MOST POPULAR SEGA PRODUCT ON DISPLAY.



•SONIC JAM



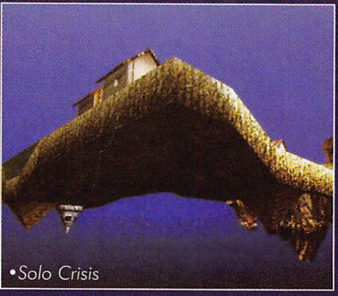




LAST BRONX

• QUINTET**FOCUS** • SOLO CRISIS

Quintet's first Sega Saturn game was finally unveiled in the form of a simulation game. Tomoyoshi Miyazaki from Quintet was live on stage to explain the basic game scenario, but from the limited demo shown it's obvious that development is still at a very early stage. Similar in style to the civilization-building games like *Populous* and Actraiser, but using 3D polygons, the basic concept is that you are a god and you control your minions who must develop skills to be able to defeat the devil. The world map is divided into two worlds, with both your surface world, where the people build, farm and worship you, and the dark world, (below the surface) where the monsters worship the devil. As you are unable to make any direct attack on the devil, you must control your people and instruct them to do all the fighting for you. However, unlike previous games in this genre, you and the devil have opposite worlds which directly affect each other. If the devil builds a mountain in his world, then a valley will appear in your world. Other such dual-world effecting events occur from the settlements you build and the actions of your people. Solo Crisis still has a long way to go and we'll keep you posted on developments.



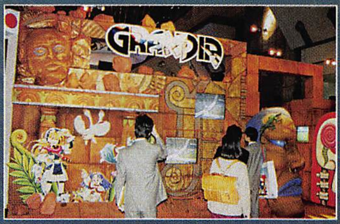
•Solo Crisis



• TOKYO**GAME**SHOW • GDNET

GAMEARTS • TREASURE • QUINTET • STING • NEVERLAND COMPANY •

The Tokyo Game Show was GDNet's first appearance in public, and they were certainly popular, with a huge line of people trailing around the booth. GameArts had the largest space with a large wall resembling one from a scene in *Grandia* taking up one whole side of the booth. The only new announcement at the show was that GameArts is working on *Gun Griffon 2*!



GAMEARTS ONLY HAD HOT VIDEO FOOTAGE OF GRANDIA.

Although it's been in the press for quite some time now, *Grandia* was still only there on video. However, it did allow us to see for the first time the actual game engine in operation. Smoothly animated polygons have never looked so good on the Saturn.

Grandia centers around Justin, a 14-year-old boy who grew up during the 'Golden Age of Exploration,' when people used massive ships to sail the seas and explore uncharted territories. However, times have changed, and the world is now in the 'Age of Industrial Revolution.' Justin lives in the port town Parm, where he often uses an item called the 'Spirit Stone,' a gift giving to him by his father. With the Spirit Stone, Justin is carried away into dreams of adventure in an ancient civilization.

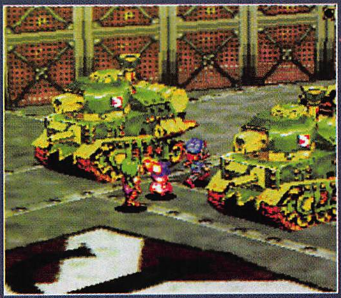
Justin's life seems rather boring, until one day when he accompanies a group of friends on a trip to visit some ancient Salto ruins. While exploring the ruins, Justin and the group sneak into a closed-off cavern, which holds a series of complex rooms and structures. As they explore the strange structure, they come across a room far different than the rest of them. As Justin is walking across the room, his Spirit Stone begins to radiate a strange light, and from inside the stone Justin can hear a strange voice. The voice calls to Justin, leading him into a strange world which will forever change his life.



• GRANDIA







• GDNET**FOCUS** • FORTHCOMING TITLES

SLAYERS

KADOKAWASHOTEN/ONION EGG

Slayers, the comical fantasy story that is currently very popular in Japan, will soon have an action RPG based upon it. Telling the story of Lina, Gauli, Zelgadis, and newcomer Luke, the game will feature both 3D rendered characters and top-quality animated cinema sequences. The original producers of *Slayers* are creating new, original animation for this game, and while it won't be based on any specific *Slayers* episode, it is sure to contain the same kind of humor and personality as the hit anime.

MAGIC SCHOOL LUNAR

KADOKAWASHOTEN/GAMEARTS/STUDIO ALEX

Originally created for Sega's portable Game Gear system, *Magic School Lunar* will follow in the footsteps of *Lunar: Silver Star Story*, heading to the Saturn. Just like *L:SSS*, the graphics and gameplay will be improved to make use of the Saturn's power, and many new animated cinemas will be added to help build upon the storyline. MSL is more of a side-story to *Lunar*, but it takes place in the same world and has many connecting references to the main series.



• MAGIC SCHOOL LUNAR

BAROQUE

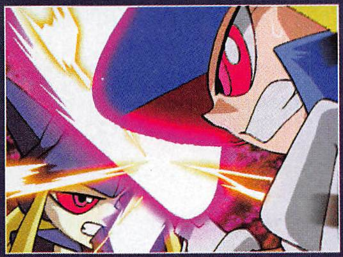
STING

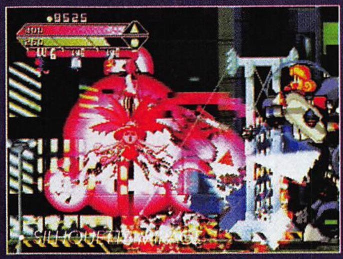
Baroque will be a very interesting game to watch, because while it's a real-time 3D adventure, it's beginning to look like it will be very different than most of the games currently out there. Sting, the game's designers, mention four key words when emphasizing what makes *Baroque* different: Multiple-plot, Freedom, Change and Strategy. While many have labeled the game an RPG, it promised to be far more detailed and innovative than your average RPG. The world you explore and the people you meet won't just be things to get you from one place to another. As you interact with the different characters in the game, what you do can change the plot and storyline, having effects on different things. In other words, what you do has consequences, like in real life—a feature long overdue in RPGs. As well, the game looks to be supported with quality visuals, the video on display looking exceptionally good.

SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

TREASURE

One of the few titles playable at the GDNet booth was Treasure's *Silhouette Mirage*, and the line to get a chance at this new game went on for what seemed like infinity. *Silhouette Mirage* marks Treasure's second game for the Sega Saturn, and it's an old-style action/shooting game. As always, Treasure has pulled off not only a good deal of fast-paced action, but graphical tricks that will amaze and impress you. Definitely a classic Treasure festival of madness.





• SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

CHAOS SEED

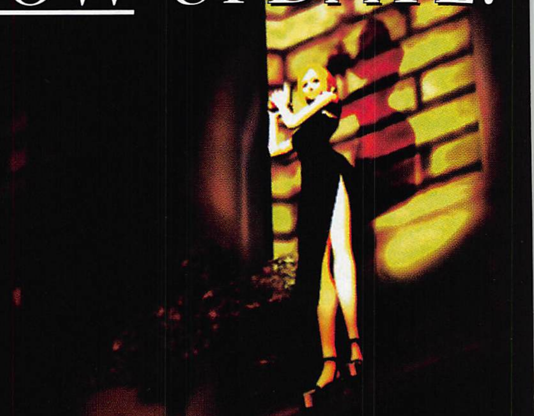
NEVERLAND COMPANY

Chaos Seed is a remake of a popular Super Famicom game for the Sega Saturn, released by Neverland Company. The original game was quite a hit for Neverland, so they've done the wise thing and come out with an upgraded version, giving it a new, updated look and feel. Indeed, instead of just porting the game over like many companies are doing, Neverland Company is spicing up the old game. *Chaos Seed* will receive visual enhancements, a new soundtrack, and a selection of opening and in-game cinema sequences. As well, the storyline will benefit from an overhaul, adding new quests, locations, story elements, and creatures to meet along the way. In addition to its traditional RPG side, *Chaos Seed* features a dungeon creation feature, and an action engine to protect your creation.



• CHAOS SEED

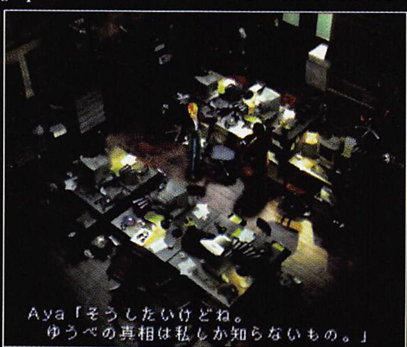
GAMEFAN UP-TO-THE-NOW UPDATE!



Mitochondria:
Millions of years old,
these incredibly tiny life forms
are waiting to revolt.
Quietly...
Inside your cells.

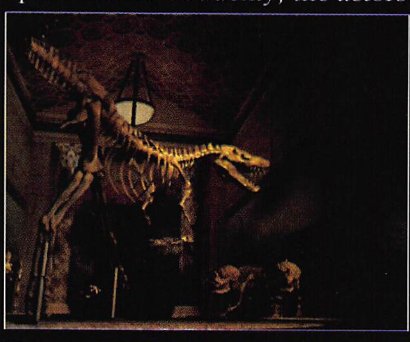
SQUARE'S [parasite eve] パラサイト イヴ™

That's Square's storyline blurb for *Parasite Eve*, their latest impossibly-brilliant-looking PlayStation RPG. One thing Square wants to make very clear about *Parasite Eve*, however, is that it is definitely a dual-culture game: It's being made at Square L.A. and has a staff ratio of 3/7; Americans comprise the seven. The main planning staff, however, is Japanese. The game is based (very loosely) on a best-selling Japanese novel of the same name by Hideaki Sena, the script and game design is by Takayuki Tokita of *Chrono Trigger*, *FFIV* and *Live-A-Live* fame, the battles are by Yoshihiko Maekawa, who directed *FFVI* and *Super Mario RPG*, the characters are designed by *FFVII*'s Tetsuya Nomura, and the music is by Yoko Shimomura, who scored *Super Mario RPG*, *Front Mission* and *Live-A-Live*. The key American staff members are Steve Gray, who has done CG work for the films *True Lies* and *Apollo 13*, and Darnell Williams, head of Square's American CG section. Most of the other American staff members are in the CG department, and the game's programmers are split down the middle—half Japanese, half American.



Very little is known about the game design, other than that it uses an engine derived from *FFVII*: Pre-rendered backgrounds (apparently in superslick 640x480 this time around, much higher than that of *FFVII*) with polygonal characters. The battle system is the latest incarnation of Square's trademark Active Time Battle System, which first debuted in 1991 with *Final Fantasy IV*. Even less is known about the storyline, except for Square's blurb above and the three main characters: Aya Brea, the hot 25-year-old female detective who appears in all but one of these game shots, her partner Daniel "Bo" Dollis, and a researcher from a Japanese university, Kunihiko Maeda.

Square has also talked about what apparently happens at the very beginning of the game: It's Christmas Eve, 1997, in New York. Aya Brea and her boyfriend are on a date at the opera house. Suddenly, the actors on stage burst into flame, screams ring out, and confusion reigns. Opera-goers and actors alike make mad dashes toward the exit. One actress remains on stage, laughing scornfully. "Maybe this woman is the perpetrator," thinks Aya, as she raises her gun towards the figure on stage.



"My name is Eve," says the woman.

Parasite Eve will be out in Japan this Winter, and Square is working hard to attempt their first worldwide simultaneous release. They plan to sell 1,000,000 copies of *Eve* in Japan, and anywhere from 1 to 2,000,000 in America. We literally did this page the day our issue closed (truth be told, the day we were meant to be at the printer!), so we're sorry we couldn't include more information. We'll try to get more for next month!





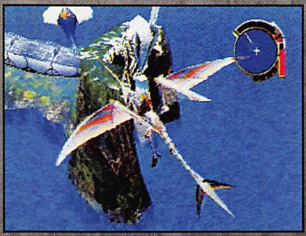


ILLUSTRATION BY TETSUYA NOMURA

· AZEL ·

SS · SEGA · 3D RPG · SUMMER

Team Andromeda is BACK! *AZEL* is the latest incarnation in the 100% skill-based *Panzer Dragoon* series... but this time it's an RPG! All the shots you see here are of the world map, and even though they appear to be shooting scenes, there aren't any in *AZEL*. Instead, the battles are command-based. Also, the number of dragons in *AZEL* is endless: The game utilizes a polygon morphing system that changes the appearance of your dragon based on four vectors to which you can assign points: Strength, Defense, Maneuverability and "Heart Skill." We'll have more hardcore mad tactics info on *AZEL: Panzer Dragoon RPG* as soon as possible. Ora ora oraaa!







· Willy Wombat ·

SS · HUDSON · ACTION · 6/27

He's big... he's bad... he's blue!! It's *Willy Wombat*, the outlaw on a quest for Miracle Gems!! *Willy Wombat*, Hudson's latest Saturn extravaganza, utilizes a new game engine called the Around Quarter View system, constructed entirely of polygons. Though the game's control is 2D, the backgrounds can be rotated 360°, so you can search for hidden passages and whatnot. *Willy Wombat* is unique in that it has character designs by Susumu Matsushita of Light & Shadows, famous for his design of Famitsu (Japan's #1 game magazine) mascot, Necky. Mr. Matsushita is also responsible for the awesome character designs in the *Motor Toon GP* series.





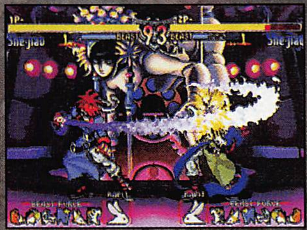


· Ra-Bi-To ("Rabbit") ·

SS · EA VICTOR · FIGHTING · JUNE

"Ra-Bi-To." Want to know what that means in Japanese? Well, "ra" means "silk." "Bi" means "to fawn upon." "To" can mean "dipper," but can also mean "fight," which I'll assume it means in this instance. Put it all together and you have... "FAWNING UPON SILK FIGHTER!!" Actually, the kanji were probably picked just because they can be read as "Rabbit" when put together. Then again, why you'd want to name a fighting game Rabbit is beyond my current mental state. The game itself, however, looks very cool... extremely Capcom. Apparently, each character has an animal helper that he can invoke during the fight. Perhaps the Rabbit of the title comes from Wu-Ling, the main character's, animal familiar. Then again the game might be poor, 'cause it recently came out in the arcade and didn't do too well. You'll know when we review it...







· Panzer Bandit ·

PS · BANPRESTO · ACTION · JULY

Treasure's making PlayStation games... that's right! You heard it here first! Look, their first project is *Guardian Heroes*! Just look at those shots! Yup, yup! Er... maybe not. Actually, Banpresto's *Panzer Bandit* appears to be a shameless rip-off of Treasure's *GH*, right down to the multi-line gameplay, practically identical (though very cool—*Panzer*'s characters were designed by manga artist Yoshitsune Izuna) character design. But hey, at least it's a good-looking rip-off, right? Right. *Panzer Bandit* is also one of the few non-sports games that supports multi-tap action; up to four people can play *Panzer Bandit* simultaneously.









GAMERA 2000

>TORCH YOUR FOES WITH THE AVENGING FLAMES OF GAMERA!!

R REVIEW

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - DAIEI / TYO
- PUBLISHER - VIRGIN
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



EVIL ROX

"....."

Let's talk about the Panzer Dragoon series. Panzer Dragoon Eine and Zwei. You know them, you love them. That is, if you're smart, you do. Now, the upcoming Panzer Dragoon RPG, Azel. Look how little that has to do with Panzer Dragoon, the shooter... even the main staff has admitted that none of them have been with the series longer than mid-way through Zwei's development. Wanna know why?! All of Team Andromeda left Sega to make this game!! This game IS Panzer Dragoon... look at those lock-on squares! Look at that radar!!

Um... um... actually, I have no idea if what I've just told you is true, but it is food for thought. You see, Gamera 2000 is so utterly identical to Panzer Dragoon it's sick. The spinning-around-with-the-L&R-buttons thing, the control, the level design, the lock-on... it's all here. About the only thing that's not is Panzer's hardcore Nausicaä-influenced theme, replaced with Japan's best-loved (alright, second best loved) giant monster, the friend of children everywhere, Gamera. Supposedly this current scenario occurs after the last Gamera movie, Gamera vs. Legion. Someone has stolen the DNA of Gamera's most popular foe, Gaos, and plans to, like, revive him or something. Now it's up to Jack Morton and his sidekick, Dr. Lisa Mukunoki, to get it back! You fly around in a jet (though there is one level in which you pilot a hoverbike,) firing laser blasts, while Gamera provides backup and shoots his famous plasma balls at opponents that you've locked onto. Strange that you don't actually PLAY as Gamera, right? I bet Gamera 2000 had nothing to do with Gamera before Daiei bought it...



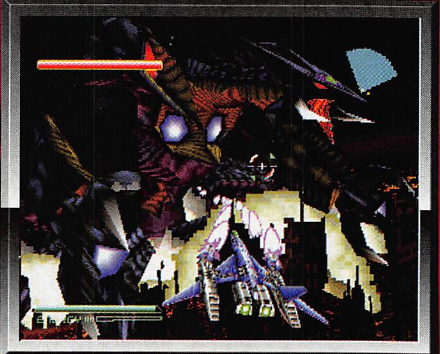


Hmm, it's the end of the second text box and I haven't talked about the game. It's a shooter; you shoot things down. As shooters go, it's of about average length. The real attraction here is the graphics—they're incredible. One stage has enough diverse and gorgeously modeled locales to comprise five perfectly respectable levels! The effects are hardcore, as well; the best lens flare this side of the N64 and Gamera's flaming plasma balls are especially notable. Also, several levels have multiple paths and multiple mid-bosses—again, very Panzer-esque.

Something I haven't yet mentioned are the FMV cinemas, starring very, very bad actors... something one would expect from a B-movie series like Gamera. They fit the theme perfectly, but you'll have a hard time understanding some of the dialogue—it's either dubbed horribly or delivered by clearly non-native speakers.

Gamera's techno tunes are also excellent—strangely enough, they're by Taito's sound team Zuntata, who have been nothing but a problem of late... but that's just my opinion; don't tell E. Storm, or you may never hear from Evil Rox again!

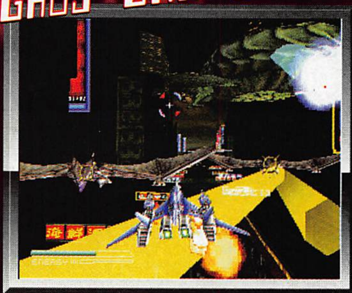
If you're a Panzer Dragoon fan or a shooter fan in general, there's no reason not to pick up Gamera 2000... a truly unexpected bonus import title. *ER*



>ONLY JACK MORTON AND LISA MUKUNOKI CAN GET BACK GAOS' DNA!!



























Although it's a bold statement, Armageddon: Magic the Gathering (influenced by the card game of the same name) just might redefine the way you look at arcade games. Not just because of the property its characters are based on, nor its beautiful graphics, or even its highly competitive and addicting gameplay—but simply by the way each of these elements are perfectly combined.

The idea was simple—create a unique title that would draw people back into the arcades. But with these game-congested areas seemingly dominated by fighting, racing and shooting titles (along with anything that sports an expensive cabinet), Acclaim wouldn't just be hard-pushed to introduce a new type of game into the arcade market; the task looked to be almost impossible. The answer? Create a new type of game that's damn near perfect, an assignment that was given to Acclaim's new in-house arcade development team.

This small group of highly talented programmers and artists took the Magic license and made something incredible. And as in almost every arcade hit, the basic idea behind Armageddon is a simple one. Using the trackball to maneuver a cursor around the arena, you must plant eggs that will eventually grow into small MtG creatures (or if you concentrate on one area, larger beasts), fire "direct damage" at your opponent, or warp out of harm's way to one of five "power points" (which are the only places on the board your character can exist). That's it! Three main actions, three buttons.

The magic behind Armageddon, though, is that this doesn't even begin to describe the actual gameplay. While you're laying your eggs and such, your opponent is not only doing the same thing, but "counter-spelling" your unhatched creatures (by placing an egg on the same spot), and even hitting you with direct damage. Meanwhile, many creatures for both sides have hatched and are tromping towards each player, forcing you to fight them off and/or transport to another area. Suddenly, you notice your army is quickly dwindling, causing you to start laying new eggs...and so this fast-paced and ultimately chaotic symphony of life and death begins again—ending only when your life points expire or the time runs out. And all of this fun running off Acclaim's new 3DFX-powered Epidemic game system, featuring high resolution graphics (640X480), over 15,000 frames of animation (just wait until you see the Blue Mage's flowing pantaloons), and gorgeous color. It's Madness!

As a former avid Magic player, I must admit the idea of an arcade title based around my once-favorite game initially left me a bit disgusted, and the fact it uses a trackball made it even worse. Of course, it only took a few minutes of play time to totally change my mind. This game is going to be hot... Look for a full review as Armageddon's release date nears, currently set for this September.

-Orion

ARMAGEDDON™

QUARTER CRUNCHERS

af

NEON GENESIS EVANGELION
Genesis 0:5



Y'know, Rei's not in Genesis 0:5 very much... we just put her here 'cause we like her better than Asuka. That's right, eat it, Asuka fans!! Rei's hotter than Asuka!! Reckonize!!

Finally! It's here... *Evangelion Genesis 0:5*! How long has it been since 0:4? Months? Unfortunately, the massive wait wasn't entirely worth it, as, in my opinion, *Genesis 0:5* isn't one of the better tapes in the series. Still, Episodes 8 (*With One Accord in a Flash/Both of You, Dance Like You Want To Win!*) and 9 (*MAGMADIVER*) are without question the wackiest, most comedic episodes in the entire series, and offer a refreshing break from the drama... and from *Genesis 0:6* on in, that's practically all *Evangelion* is.

The tape begins with *Episode 9: With One Accord in a Flash* (an odd translation on AD Vision's part; the original episode name meant something like "In An Instant, Hearts Overlapping"), an extremely wacky episode in which we see the beginnings of Asuka's new life in Japan—being a foreign babe, she's very popular at school. However, the seventh Angel attacks and promptly splits into two, trouncing Units 01 and 02. The UN is able to make the Angel regress into a dormant state with an N2 mine, giving Asuka and Shinji a few days to undergo Unison Training to synchronize with each other so they can attack both Angels simultaneously. After a hilarious montage sequence of Asuka and Shinji attempting to synchronize, we're treated to 62 seconds of godlike animation and music as Units 01 and 02 defeat the Angel in perfect unison.

Episode 10, *MAGMADIVER*, is beloved by many, for what reason I can't quite figure out. It's such a popular episode that AD Vision even trumpeted the fact that 0:5 contained it on it's cover! In my opinion, it's wholly average. Maybe it's so popular because of all the cute Asuka scenes in it ("back roll entry!") or something. At any rate, in this episode an embryonic angel is discovered in the volcanic Mt. Asama, and Asuka is ordered to retrieve it. Yet by the time her D-Type Equipment reaches its maximum depth, the angel still hasn't been found, and the suit is rapidly deteriorating...

And now, a quick word about the dubbing: It's awful. As dubs go, it's probably one of the better ones, but Shinji's whining and Asuka's totally incorrect voice get really annoying. Again, I can only recommend the sub.

AF Review

F D C B A

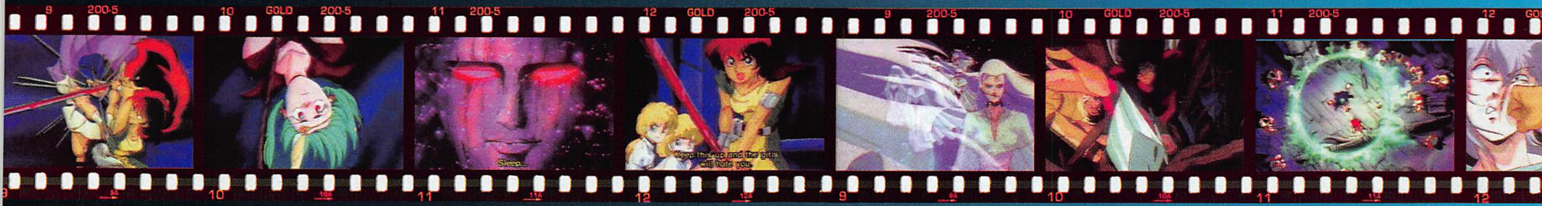
animation
dubbing
story
music

A









Gude Crest: The Emblem of Gude



Those somehow-familiar (OK, I remember the PC Engine game, but where else have I seen Efe and Jira??) twin swordswomen, Efera and Jiliora, return in *Gude Crest: The Emblem of Gude*, a thoroughly average girls-with-swords adventure. It seems that Efera and Jiliora, both princesses from faraway lands, have landed themselves on a slave ship full of children. With their freaky-looking li'l friend Orin, they escape, and in the process get the legendary Gude Crest, which they decide must be returned to its owner. Unfortunately, the Crest belongs to the young Princess Rubiella and her brother Julian, who've been captured by an evil cult that worships a vicious goddess called the Supreme Mother. Needless to say, Efe and Jira smash everything and everyone to save the day.



At first, Gude Crest is hard to watch; the character designs are simply poor and everything about the anime seems terribly, terribly *old*, like you vaguely remember seeing this anime when you were first getting into it back in the '80s. In the long run, however, the excellent action/fight sequences and the extremely watchable characters of Efera and Jiliora themselves win out, and you find yourself at least liking *Gude*. It's not one you'll remember forever, but *Gude* is a decent diversion while you're waiting for the next epic. (Speaking of epic, it's time for another epic fantasy anime. Well, *Escaflowne*'s coming... we'll have to wait for that.)

AF Review
animation / (n/a) / story / music — F D C B A
C+

Golden Boy Volume 3



Kintaro Oe, the wonderful, lovable student of life, who travels around to see the world and experience many things (and women): This time around, in *Golden Boy Volume 3*, he finds himself helping out in a small family-owned noodle shop. The owner of the shop has a beautiful daughter named Noriko, and it seems that the lovely Noriko has a suitor, Kogure, who wants to take advantage of her trusting, innocent nature, marry her, and take over her father's noodle shop to turn it into nightclub. Kintaro accidentally finds this out, and he becomes determined to save the fair Noriko from the clutches of such an evil, two-faced man.

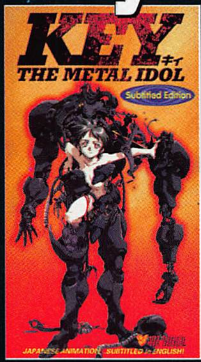


Whereas the previous *Golden Boys* were based around sexy, perverted humor, *Golden Boy Volume 3* is more of a romantic comedy which gets a bit naughty now and then. It's almost as if the creators were trying to clean up *Golden Boy*'s image, and while it certainly isn't bad, it's just not the same juvenile fun. I mean, what would Beavis and Butthead be if they suddenly stopped breaking things and getting into trouble? Being fair, though, everything else about the show is still just as good. The animation is superb and the English cast does a respectable job.

In the end, I was a little disappointed with *GB3*. I was expecting to sit down and have a half hour of childish, guiltless laughs, and while I did have a few moments of uncontrollable laughter, it just wasn't the same. I defiantly recommend seeing it, just don't expect quite the same *Golden Boy*.

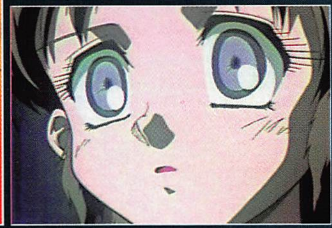
AF Review
animation / dubbing / story / music — F D C B A
B-

Key the Metal Idol Ver. 1



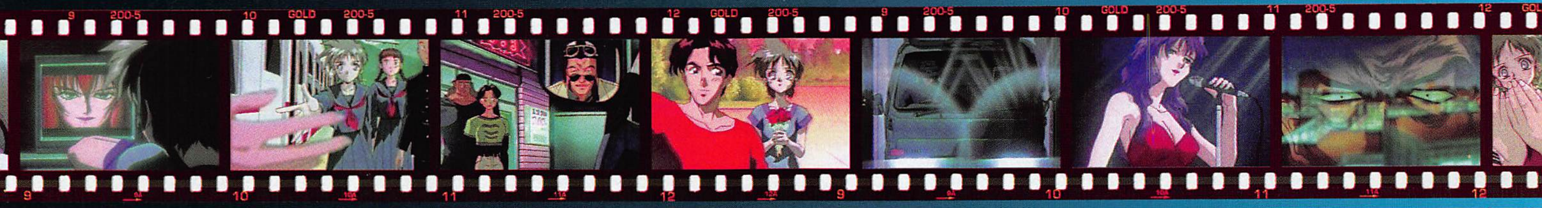
A cold, emotionless, fragile robot, a robot who wants nothing more than to become human. This is Key, the creation of her 'grandfather,' a scientist named Murao Mima. She rushes home from school one day to find him dead, a tape recorded with his dying words the only thing remaining. Her body won't last forever, her battery will one day run out, and before that happens, she must complete her grandfather's mission to make her human. The only problem—to become human, she must find and make 30,000 friends.

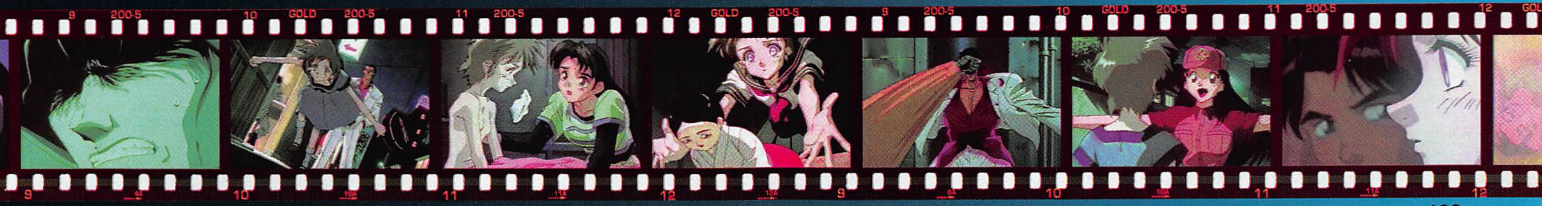
Thus we are introduced to Key, and the strange, almost surreal version of Japan in which she lives. She travels, alone, to Tokyo, with the hopes of meeting as many people as she can. As she arrives, strange events begin to unfold around her, seemingly random at first, but as they occur we get a glimpse of a much bigger picture. What really happened to cause her grandfather's death? What exactly will making so many friends do for Key? And what of the strange idol singer Key takes such an interest in? Be prepared to not understand everything right away—this is a series which you will have to watch again to fully understand everything.

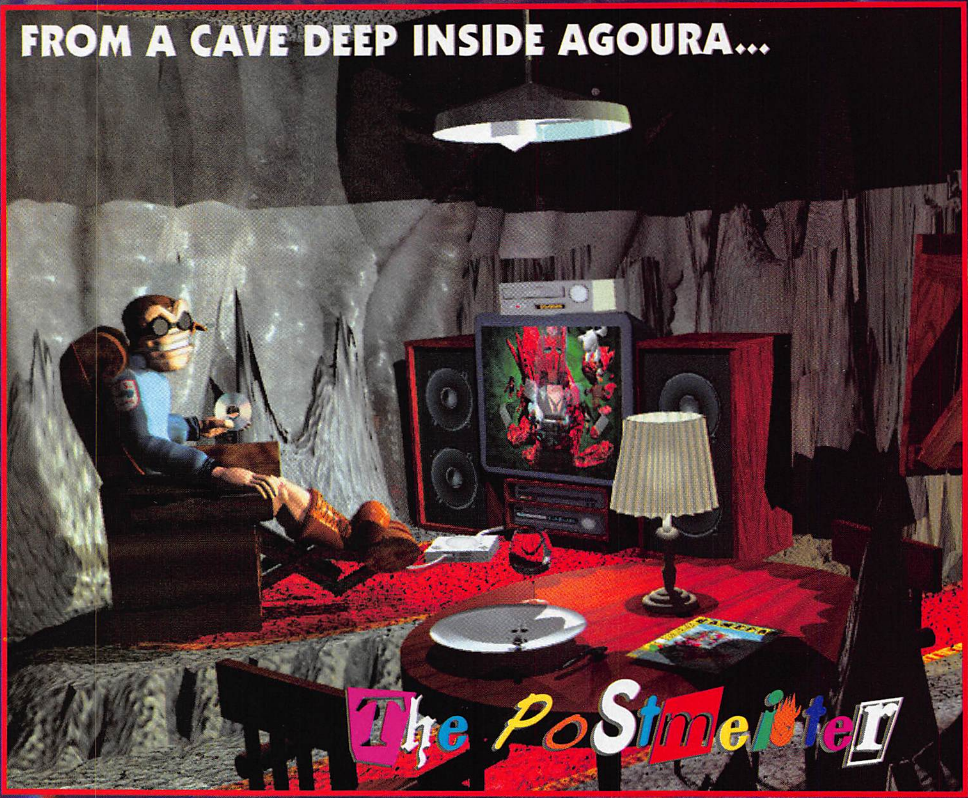


The one thing that bothered me about *Key:TMI* was Viz's job of subtitling. At a number of points during the show, key characters would talk, and no translation of what they were saying was provided. Still, I'm happy to see *Key* get a US release, and wish more companies would release similar titles that have yet to see our shores, such as *Video Girl Ai*. Everything about *Key* reminds me of older anime that I was into when I was first becoming a fan, and I welcome it with open arms.

AF Review
animation / dubbing / story / music — F D C B A
B







Dear Posty,

Why does Gamefan have such a small Saturn section. This is how your issue goes: PS section, small SS section, PS section again, N64 section, and another big PS section. Example: Vol. 5 Issue 5. Come on GameFan, you can do better than that. You're my favorite magazine, but you're not fairrrr! Why don't you review better games for the SS section. Not *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Quake*, and especially not *Manx TT*. Review something like *Grandia* or *Airs Adventure*. Last question, why is PS coverage of a game sometimes bigger than the SS coverage of the same game, like *Fighting Force* or *Tomb Raider*? Thanks for listening.

Evans Cade
West Palm Beach, Florida.

Ok, I've received literally HUNDREDS of letters from disgruntled Saturn owners along these lines, and the truth may sting a little. The simple fact is: Saturn doesn't get as much coverage as PS because THERE AREN'T AS MANY SATURN GAMES COMING OUT! Honestly. There's no conspiracy at work here. I love my Saturn dearly, as do most of Team GameFan. But when we don't get sent the games, there's nothing we can do about it. It's no secret that Saturn is struggling in the US and as a result less and less games are getting released. Companies like Shiny, Core and Atlus have stopped producing Saturn games. Doesn't that tell you something? Now, I wouldn't say the Saturn's ready to give up the ghost quite yet, but it's definitely becoming more of a niche market (in the US at least).

Oh yeah, your comments regarding Duke Nukem 3D *and* Quake *are reprehensible. They're two of Sega's biggest exclusives, not to mention fantastic games in their own right. Play them before you pass judgment. And* Manx TT*'s not bad either.*

Finally, the reason we gave PS Fighting Force *and* Tomb Raider *more coverage than the SS versions was because Sony paid us. Just kidding. It was because the PS versions were more complete.*

Das Uber Postmeister,

Did he just say what I think he just said? I had to go back and play through two hours of game just to see the sequence again. Yes he did. Diego said 's**t.' Wow. Now let me set this up for you. It happens during one of the most climactic scenes in a game that thrives on a great story line. The characters in the party of *Vandal Hearts* are at a complete loss, their last hope of survival is gone. What else is there to say?

Language in videogames is an issue that needs to be dealt with. I would like to start this discussion by congratulating Konami for sticking with this bold move. They kept the M17+ rating and risked taking in a smaller profit for the good of the game. Now I'm not radical. I wouldn't dare say kill all the kiddy games and bring on the 'mature' sex, gore and profanity. I wouldn't expect *Mario* or *Crash* to break into a Tarantino dialogue. Each game has its own tone (or cuteness level). There is a time and place for profanity and what Diego said perfectly summed up their situation. Let me give you an example to prove how appropriate profanity can be. You can not tell me that you all didn't mind dishing out $7 to see *Star Trek: Generations* after hearing Data say exactly the same thing. It fit so damn perfect. What do you think?

Thanks for your time,
Erik Jakobsen
San Pedro, CA

*What do I think? I think you're a sad man for playing through two hours of game just to watch a character say s**t. As for profanity in videogames? **** it, why the **** not?*

Dear Postmeister,

First off, I'd like to say that out of all the gaming mags, I think that GameFan is the best. I also like the info you've been giving us readers on *FFVII*. Here are my questions.

1. Are there going to be any selectable characters in *TR2* besides Lara?
2. How many selectable characters will be *RE2* and who are they?
3. When is *Tobal 2* coming to the US.?
4. I just got *Need For Speed 2* in May and it wasn't supposed to come out until June or July. Why did I get it so early?
5. I heard that there is going to be a PS game that is a combination of *FF1*, *FF2* and *FF3* built into one game. Is this true? If so when is it coming out?
6. What is the storyline for *FFVII*? Is Cloud the main character?
7. How much do you get paid?

Well, that's it. Thanks.
Paul Aguilar
Barstow, Ca.

1. It's not confirmed, but there are rumors that you may be able to play as other explorers. The PC version is said to be networkable!
2. The two we know of so far are Elza (a motorcycle champion) and Leon (a police officer). Since the game's going through a total reworking, it's possible there will be more.
3. Square and Sony have both stated that they have no plans to release Tobal 2 over here. Insanity if you ask me.
4. SO IT WAS YOU WHO BOUGHT IT!!!

I was wondering what sad, disturbed individuals were keeping that turd at the top of the charts and now I know. Paul, you should be ashamed of yourself. I suppose it was you who bought WCW vs. The World *and* Cruis'n' USA *as well?*
5. Square recently released FF4 *on PS in Japan, and there was talk of* 5 *and* 6 *following. But nothing on* 1, 2 *or* 3. *Sorry.*
6. When the game starts all you know is that you're playing an ex-soldier named Cloud who is chasing a character called Sephiros. That's it. To tell you any more would ruin the game.
7. What's 'paid?'

Dear Mr. Meister,

Fighting games have been all the rage these past few years. I can remember when *Street Fighter 2* first came out way back and people used to crowd the machine. I was awed by the graphics and excitement of that game, and was one of the first people to get a copy when it came out for Super Nintendo. Now, over half a decade later, people are still clamoring over fighting games. I, however, have changed in my opinion. I cannot figure out why people continue to play these games: they're all the same! All the companies do is improve the graphics and sometimes add another button. No originality whatsoever. Wow, in *Battle Arena Toshinden* you can actually 'move around' in a '3D environment.' Big deal, still looks like the same fireball throwing, beat every character and fight the boss type game to me.

Speaking of *SF*, why have ALL the *SF* games been huge hits? I don't understand. Why do people love to play the same games over and over? The same can be said for *MK3* and its 'upgrades.' I don't care about pixel size or animation rate, the whole fighting game concept is getting very, very old. How many fireballs does someone have to throw before he gets it? Although there are hundreds, if not thousands, of fighting games out there, I still consider there to be only two: the fireball *Street Fighter*-type game and the hand-to-hand *Virtua Fighter* type game. Two games made into a thousand by changing things slightly to make a quick a buck. People always look at me like I'm crazy when I say that fighting games stink, so I thought I'd write this letter to express the reasons for my opinion.

Thank you very much for reading,
Gibson Yen
Silver Spring, MD

You raise some interesting points, though personally I think you're being a bit harsh. Yes, fighting games are very similar, but then most games within the same genre usually are. That's the whole point of a genre: building on a set of established parameters. It just so happens that in the case of fighting games, SF2 *laid down those parameters. If you're looking for something a little different, try* Tobal 2.

Dear Posty,

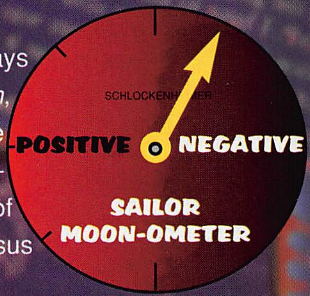
I am a devoted PlayStation and *Street Fighter* fan. I couldn't be more happy when I heard that *X-Men Vs Street Fighter* wouldn't be a Saturn exclusive, and I think it's a good (place-your-life-on-it) bet that *SF3* will be released on PlayStation in '98. However, I have a problem with Sony's controller. It wasn't good for *SFA2* and I can't picture it being any better on *X-Men Vs SF*. Are there any third-party PlayStation controllers with a 3x2 or 4x2 layout and a decent d-pad?

Jonathan 'The Palpatine' Randolph
Phoenix, AZ

I hate to be the one to burst your bubble, Jonathan, but Capcom STILL hasn't announced SF Vs X-Men *for the PS. As far as we know, it's still a Saturn exclusive. And when you see how much animation they had to cut out of* Marvel Super Heroes *to fit it on PS, it's easy to realize why. Bottom line: If you want to play the most accurate versions of Capcom's 2D fighters at home, you're gonna have to bite the bullet and get a Saturn with RAM cart. As for* SF3*, we've heard that it's being converted to home systems for a fourth quarter release this year, but we're not 100% sure. Oh yeah, Evil Rox recommends a Hori 6B fighting pad. Whatever that is.*

SAILOR MOON-OMETER!

Nearly every letter I get these days has some mention of *Sailor Moon*, be it good or bad. So here, for the first time, is the Sailor Moon-ometer, representing what portion of SM mentions are positive versus negative.



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OTHER STUFF

NINTENDO DD64 INFORMATION!

It's been confirmed that yes, the DD64 (Disk Drive 64) will be released in Japan this December. The DD64 will retail for 12,800 Yen ($99.00) and the games will cost between 4800yen and 5800yen ($42 to $52), roughly the same price as a PlayStation game in Japan. The DD64 holds 64 Megabytes of data, which with compression can be optimized to100 Megabytes. It has faster access time than a 5x speed CD player, and comes complete with a modem jack for instant telecommunication. Another new addition is the clock and calender function as found in the Saturn.

3 games will launch this year in Japan with the DD64: *Mother 3*, *Mario Paint 64* and *Sim City 64*, possibly even *Pocket Monsters 64*. There are said too be over 20 third party DD64 games in development in Japan, while Nintendo has over 15 games including *Zelda 64*, *Super Mario RPG 64*, *Dream 64 DD* (not to be confused with the cart version), *SimCopter*, *Killer Instinct 3* and *Ultra Donkey Kong* (*DKC64*).

RUMBLE IN THE PAD!

Here's a list of games currently set to be compatible with the Rumble Pack!

Chameleon Twist
Clay Fighter 63 1/3
Fishing
F-Zero 64
Hiryu No Ken Twin
Sonic Wings Assault
Top Gear Rally
Wild Choppers

RUMBLE THIS!

Wild Choppers was actually delayed (it's fallen from its scheduled May 23rd release to the unknown list in Japan) because the producer thought the pack worked so well with *StarFox*, they've decided to go back and re-do parts of *WC* to interact with the Rumble Pack.

SEGA STUFF

Last Bronx will be coming on not 1 but 2 CDs! No word on why Sega has added the 2nd disk but rumor has it it's a memorabilia thing filled with pictures and movies. The super-bouncy *Dead or Alive* will be released for Saturn in September (in Japan) and Tecmo has told me that a sequel is also in development.

AM2 is said to be working on two versions of *Virtua Fighter 3*: one version that uses the upgrade and another version without. The upgrade is said to be either a 64bit CPU or a RAM upgrade similar to what Sega wanted to do on the Genesis with the 32X. Sega has unofficially told us that *VF3* will be at the E3; perhaps not in playable form but rather on video.

Good news for *Sonic* fans. There is much talk of Sega making a *Sonic* racing game (*Sonic Kart?*) for the Saturn and that it will be released later this year.

We have some more info on Sega's new system the Dural/Black Belt/Saturn 2/Giga Drive/take your pick! The polygon count is still between 1 to 2 million, MicroSoft is making the OS, 3DFX is making the graphics chip, the CPU is based on the SH4 200 Mhz chip, the sound chip is based on Creative's AWE 32 sound card and the machine will ship with between16 and 32 megs of RAM. Currently the hardware is in the hands of Sega developers only—3rd parties won't receive development stations for approx. 3 to 5 months.

There's talk of Model 4 appearing as early as next year! Sega is apparently increasing their efforts in response to Konami's Cobra hardware which can crank out 5 million polys a second. But let us not forget, Yu Suzuki said that *Virtua Fighter 4* would be the first Model 4 game...

And finally, Sega may be dropping the price of the Saturn in the US to around $129 or even cheaper sometime in the next 2 to 4 weeks.

NAMCO

Namco has confirmed that they will be showing AN ALL NEW title at this year's E3. The game, developed in their US offices, will be the main attraction at their stand and will be released in the US first. Namco has also told us that *Tekken 3* will NOT be released in the US this year, although it will be in Japan. Also *Tekken 4* is not currently in development because the *Tekken* team are hard at work making *Tekken 3* for the PlayStation. So when PS *Tekken 3* is finished the team will start work on the follow-up.

INTERACT INTRODUCES VD3 WHEEL FOR PS AND N64

Substance D just got back from beautiful Monterey, CA, home of the Laguna Seca Raceway where Interact were hosting a day of racing at Skip Barber's famous race driving school. Debuting their new V3 Racing Wheel for the PS and N64 (PC version to follow), Substance D and several other members of the press were allowed to experience the thrill of racing an open-wheel, open-cockpit



Formula Dodge around one of the world's best race tracks (in racing suit and helmet, no less). Following this awesome day of racing, we were given a hands-on test of their new analog wheel, the V3. Both N64 and PS versions tilt, extend, offer fully reconfigurable buttons and sensitivity, have detachable foot pedals, and multi-position operation. The N64 V3 adds a Y axis control slider for vertical movement and a memory pak slot.

The V3 worked beautifully with *Rage Racer* and was only so-so for *Mario Kart 64*, simply because it was almost impossible to do a proper power slide with the wheel. I suspect that games like the upcoming *Top Gear Rally* and *Rev Limit* will be far more suitable. Look for the V3 in July at a very reasonable street price of around 50 bucks. Extra special thanks to Michael, Melissa, and Jason at Interact for setting up the day of racing and to everyone at Skip Barber's school for making it a total blast.

LITTON DEVELOPS PROTOTYPE... GLASSES-FREE 3D!

The dream of glasses-free 3D took one step closer to reality as Litton Industries unveiled their new, autostereoscopic 3D display. Developed in conjunction with Autostereo Systems of Cambridge, England, and Infinity Multimedia, their new technology offers a motion-parallaxed, stereoscopic 3D display with no glasses required. The way it works is quite technical, far too much so to condense into anything meaningful, but I've seen it, and it works. Almost cooler than seeing depth was the ability for several independent images to be shown on one display (also the key to the depth). By moving only inches to one side or the other, the on-screen image would completely change. Imagine playing multiplayer *Doom Deathmatch* on one screen! Expect to see arcade applications in about a year and apparently, some big names have approached Litton about utilizing their technology. A few years down the road, look for 3D PC monitors.

THE MERGER'S OFF!

The merger between Sega and Bandai is off! How 'bout that?! It seems mid level management over at Bandai got a tad shaken not stirred when Sega told them... about the 64X!!! Yee-gads, not again!! (Just kidding) Actually, Bandai requested a cancellation of the merger and offered a business alliance instead, which Sega accepted. Employees at the toymaker were nervous about the change of environment, among other things. But when the President's Tamagotchi mysteriously bit the big one, that was it!!! "The deal's off!" he cried. (I'm kidding again.)

SONY

Sony has confirmed that the PlayStation will be reduced in price to $99 by no later than July. Square has stated that they will not be releasing *Tobal 2* here in the US (let's hope someone else picks up the rights). *Front Mission 2* will be coming to the PS sometime next year, while *Tomb Raider 2* is rumored to be an exclusive title for the PS similar to Square's *FF* deal. Sony has just recently released their $1000 DVD player with Mpeg 2. The Mpeg 2 chip in the DVD player was designed by Sony and may appear in the inevitable next Sony game console, which by the way, Sony will not introduce until the time is right. If all this talk about the next Sony console makes you nervous (as it does me), don't worry, everything you hear is pure spec-

ulation at this point and SCE assures us it's a ways off. Somewhere deep inside Sony R&D they are certainly working on new technology but, uh, I doubt they'd like, feel the need to leak it. We're talkin' mid '99.

FINAL ROUND

- Rumors are flying around that *Phantasy Star 5* is in development for Saturn. Sega would neither confirm nor deny its existence...
- The sequel to Psygnosis' *Formula 1*, *Formula1 '97*, will be at the E3.
- The Neo•Geo 64 will be released at the end of this year in Japan for under $500. How many games will be available at launch is still up in the air, but expect *Samurai Shodown 64* to be among the first. Games will be released on CDs and we have word that new sequels to both *King of Fighters* and *Real Bout* are already in production.
- Acclaim is making *WWF's Raw is War* for the Nintendo 64. This version of the game, which is also being made for the PlayStation, will be polygonal. *Raw* will debut at E3 and should be out by the end of the year.
- Sources at Nintendo say that Nintendo of Japan's R&D 2, the creators of *Metroid*, are making a 3-D fighting game.
- Rumors are floating around that the next *Crash* game (after *Crash 2*) may be a kart racing game similar to *Mario Kart 64*! Crash Kart?!!
- Capcom's Yoshiki Okamoto, has stated that the company is examining the possibility of putting *Resident Evil* on a 128-megabit N64 cartridge! They may even change the theme from horror to ninja (with booby traps, etc). Speaking of *Resident Evil*, look for *Resident Evil Dash* (*RE* remix) to make an appearance at E3.
- For all you Tamagotchi lovers, Bandai is making Tamagotchi for the DD64 sometime next year. No word on a release date.

Working Designs and GameFan Bury the Hatchet!

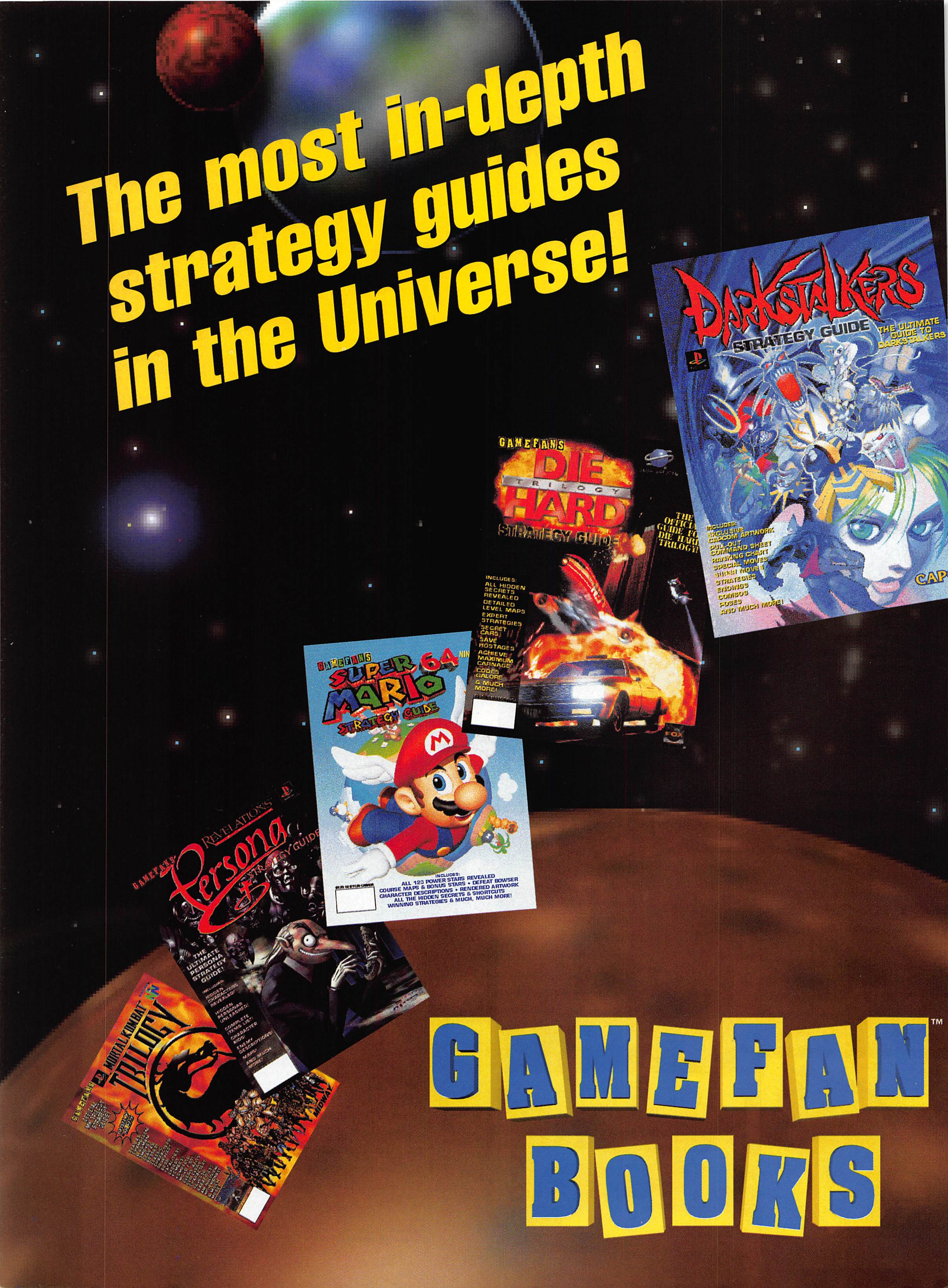
We would like to take this opportunity to lay to rest once and for all the issue regarding our *Lunar* review in Volume 3 Issue 10 (October '95). Though we loved the game (and still do), the US version which the editorial was based on was played for only 12 hours (less than 1/3 through) when the review was written. Upon completing the game, we have realized that the translation overall was excellent, and hereby would like to apologize to everyone at Working Designs for the misunderstanding which ensued. We look forward earnestly to bringing our readers quality coverage on all of Working Designs' upcoming titles, which now include PlayStation games!

IT'S TIME TO GET A GRIP PEOPLE...

Reality Quest's The Glove, a next generation controller incorporating natural finger button action and state-of-the-art wrist- motion sensing technology, recently made its way onto my nimble controller hand. Although the prototype still had a few bugs, I must admit, it is a rather cool sensation actually pointing where you want to go with a flick of the wrist, buttons tucked neatly at each finger's end. Advanced techniques (exhibited by the inventor himself) included insane combos, as he'd actually turn his wrist to mimic the fireball motion! (It's like, you're the d-pad!) Could this be the way we'll play games in the future? Well, RQ sure hopes so. We'll review The Glove as soon as we get our hand on a final. Look for as PS version to hit 4th quarter '97 with an N64 version close behind.






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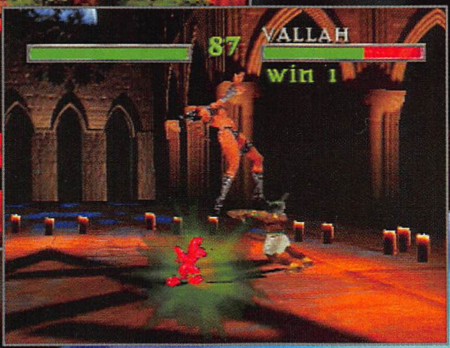
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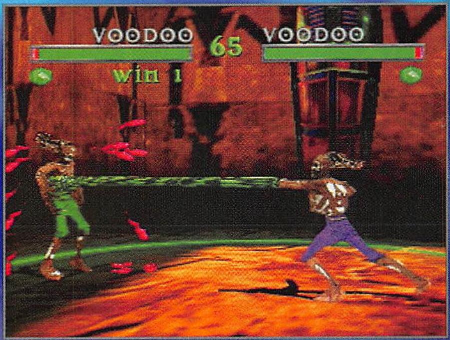






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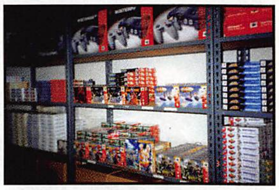
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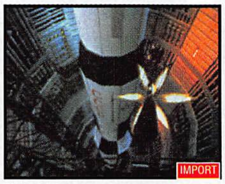
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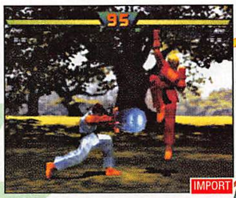
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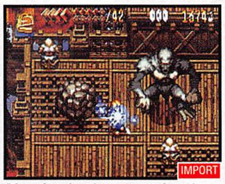
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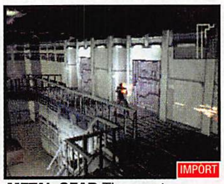
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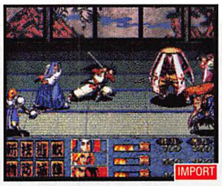
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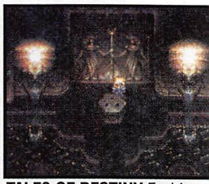
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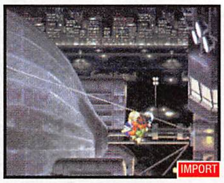
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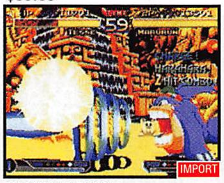
BREATH OF FIRE 3 Capcom is about to astound us all once again. After viewing of an early promo video on this title the Cave staff is still wondering if things can get any better than this.



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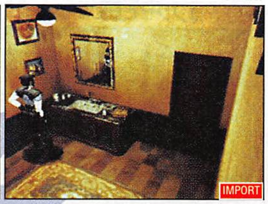


See page 5 for music CD!!

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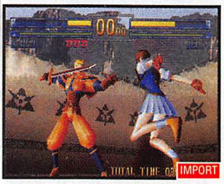
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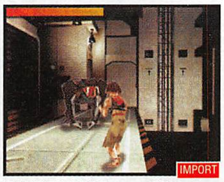
IMPORT

RABBIT Comical fighters seem to be gaining popularity. Nin Ku, Waku Waku 7, and now Rabbit. Rabbit combines the antics of Waku and classics like Kabuki Klash in one juicy package. **$64.95**



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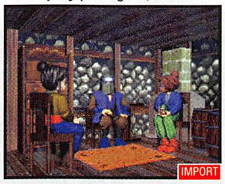
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FAKE DOWN Enter a 3D action world brought to you by the creators of the most highly regarded animated film in Japan, Akira. ***CALL!***



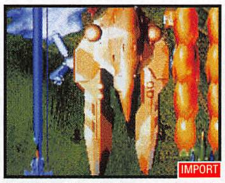
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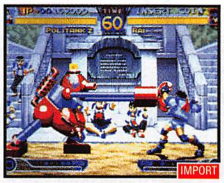
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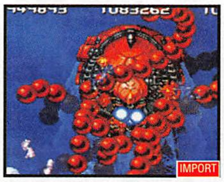
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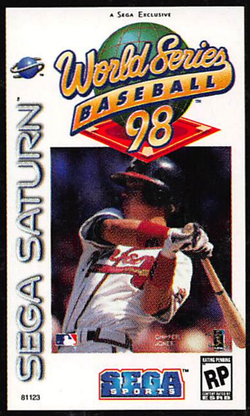
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